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(Re)Articulating Remains: Mass Grave Exhumation and Genocide Corpses in Rwanda

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Declaration

1. I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgement, the work presented is entirely my own.

2. I confirm that this thesis presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Social Anthropology), has

i. Been composed entirely by myself

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iii. Not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification

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Laura Major

April 11 2016

Abstract and Lay Summary

In Rwanda, graves containing the bodies of those killed during conflict and the 1994 genocide hold great significance both for the Rwandan state and for individuals caught up in the violent conflicts that have troubled the country over the last century. The ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) has initiated a national exhumation program, unearthing thousands of genocide victims. The exhumations are undertaken by genocide survivors and local community members who unearth the bodies, disarticulate the corpses, wash and layout the bones for re-internment together. The destruction of graves and/or the reconstruction of memorials takes place alongside this process, a transformation into collective spaces of genocide 'remembrance'.

My thesis interrogates these processes and considers a conundrum: in as much as these are revealing acts, making visible the horrors of a violent death, that also conceal and complicate. Understanding the multiple intentions behind this work requires a delicate unpacking of the everyday presence of uncertainty within Rwanda post-genocide and a careful consideration of the properties of materials through which troubling memories are made visible. These are inherently risky projects and thinking through the transformations that are enacted upon the recovered items invites fresh review of the potential for material remains of the dead to evoke destabilizing pasts or assist in the imagining of the future at a salient moment for Rwanda.

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Chapter One: Introduction
(Re)Articulating Remains

A bicycle-taxi driver puffs his way up a hill next to a cemetery and around a high wire fence surrounding the church and crypts of Nyamata Genocide Memorial in southern Rwanda.

The security guard at the gates is swinging his wooden club to and fro over his arm. His expression suggests boredom will not be alleviated by my arrival. He waves at the seating by the front door of the church. A twenty minute wait and the summoned guide arrives by motorbike. There is an introduction, very fast and softly spoken: "This is the memorial…ten thousand people had locked themselves inside in an attempt to escape the *interahamwe* soldiers…here (pointing at the buckled iron security doors) is where the soldiers broke into the church…they came and killed everyone inside … you will see there the clothing of forty-five thousand people, only ten thousand were killed here but we have found many more, they have been brought here too. You will go downstairs in the church, there is a coffin of a woman who was tortured here, she was attacked like many of the women … around the back of the church are mass graves where the people are buried. Now you can go inside."

I wander into the gloom only then realising that the guide will not be joining me. Low wooden benches run in a semi-circle, four or five rows deep facing an empty altar. The seating is barely visible beneath piles of filthy clothing, tangled and matted together by clumps of thick red soil. Shirts, trousers, skirts, shoes and the occasional painful glimpse – a soft pink blanket, a small striped tie. Twenty years of exposure have faded out the smell of decay, instead there is a musty atmosphere. The security guard stares from the doorway.

Steps in the church floor, just in front of the altar lead down into a bright white display room. My descending footsteps on the stairs are echoed by those of the security guard. My fidgeting companion and I stand awkwardly together in front of a glass cabinet. Skulls are displayed in neat lines. The bones are piled onto the shelf underneath. As a novice in the examination of bones, I can't tell where the signs of violence might be displayed – here and there are gaping holes in a cranium but the bones are also crumbling apart. Fragments of white brittle bone are scattered about and at the back of the cabinet a skull lies on its side, the facial features crumbled. The shelves are glass, including the base. We peer underneath. Through the glass floor there is a deep drop to the base of a crypt. On the floor a single coffin is swathed in white and purple cloth. A large wooden crucifix is rested across the length of the lid. I ask my guard if he speaks English: "No". French?: "No … *iKinyarwanda* only".

Around the back of the church buildings are mass graves, the concrete lids of which are at ground level. Wooden steps descend into darkness through the lids. I'm hesitant but the guard is clomping down the steps and indicating that I should join.

Inside, daylight from a roof vent lifts the gloom a little. Coffins are stacked from the roof to the floor on both sides of a narrow walkway. The gap between the shelves is barely wide enough for a person, my shoulders brush up against the wooden boxes. I squeeze further along the room towards the back wall where the stacks are replaced by shelving and more bones are exposed. Hundreds of skulls, piles of leg and arm bones, and a mass of ribs and smaller bone fragments are arranged in piles. It is claustrophobic, silent, and hot. There is an odd musty smell. The

> security guard is loitering at the foot of the steps, twisting in his fingers the trailing ends of a coffin shroud and rocking on his heels. The light from the entrance above us throws his profile into shade.
>
> ***EDITED FROM FIELDNOTES, FEBRUARY 2011***

Confronting the bones at Nyamata was unsettling. What are these remains intended to communicate? Who is the intended audience? Where do the bones originate and who, if anyone, claims ownership of them now?

Nyamata memorial is one of hundreds of memorials in Rwanda which contain human remains purported to be those of victims of the 1994 genocide. These official sites of memory are managed by Tutsi Survivors of the 1994 genocide and by the governing Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).[1]

The memorials comprise of crypts that may be set into the ground or exist as buildings that can be walked into at ground level. The bones and flesh that are stored inside these sites are derived from hundreds, sometimes thousands, of corpses. Bones are disarticulated one from another and are stored in a mass collective of remains which are grouped according to rough anatomical type. The remains may be stored on shelving or in collective coffins.

Memorials may be readily accessible to the public and are a popular destination for tourists. These memorials, or *Kwibuka* (in Kinyarwanda literally translated as 'things or places to remember with') have a pervasive residency; in Rwanda, they loom over quotidian space, most especially in the south of the country where Tutsi massacres during the genocide were

[1] I have capitalised the term 'Survivor' throughout the thesis so that it is clearly set aside as a specific identity.

most frequent. A journey along the main road from Kigali and through southern Rwanda is powerfully illustrative of this effect. A mass grave memorial stands at the roadside at almost every town and village along this densely populated route.

The memorials are compelling. Globally, the inclusion of human remains in war memorials is not uncommon but the manner in which these remains are exhumed, transformed and stored is highly unusual. In Rwanda, this treatment of the bodies is both unique and seemingly without historical precedent.

Their presentation as a collective is intended to give a sense of the sheer scale and inhumanity of the destruction during genocide. These are, however, not just the remains of an amorphous mass of people or a symbolic reminder of a massive

outbreak of violence but also the bones of individual persons with distinct biographies, people whose relatives under more normal circumstances would claim some association with these bodies as specific to a person. They are also, as human remains, materials with very particular properties, attributes which grant them unusual agency over and above, for instance, the soiled clothing and personal possessions which are sometimes also included in these memorial sites. These are mortal remnants of the dead set into a complex history and present circumstance. The presence of a security guard at the Nyamata memorial is a hint towards some of this complexity, as is this perplexing presentation of the bones, both disarticulated one from another, and amassed in a de-individuated collective.

Many of the bones inside the memorials are the outcome of an organised programme of exhumation of mass and individual burials of presumed Tutsi victims of genocide which has taken place across Rwanda over the last decade. The work is led by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). These exhumations are undertaken under the assumption that there are between 800,000 and a million bodies of victims of the ‘Genocide against the Tutsi’

buried within Rwanda. Many lie in mass graves, some are interred in family plots and a large number are assumed concealed in shallow burial plots.

In some cases a memorial will contain or be associated with a mass grave, either a soil burial or sometimes a hastily constructed crypt that has not been opened for a decade or more. In these cases the remains may not have been reduced to bone and disarticulated but may lie as they fell, as comingled skeletal remains or as bodies wrapped in temporary shrouds.

The mass grave exhumations unearth the remains of dead with established identities and, more often, those with identities unknown. Exhumation is carried out by teams, largely of people who identify themselves as 'Survivors of the genocide' (literally translates to Kinyarwanda as '*umucikacumu*': to survive)[2], with coordination undertaken by officials from The National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide (CNLG; in French: *La Commission Nationale de Lutte contre le Genocide*) or local partner organisations, such as IBUKA[3], the national umbrella organisation for genocide Survivors. The task of the teams is laborious and difficult. Fragments of bodies, or items believed to be fragments of bodies, are painstakingly sifted from the masses of substrate removed from the graves. Soil is washed away from the exhumed substances, and the human remains are unraveled, with personal possessions, clothes, identity cards, bones, flesh and soft tissue separated one from another. If a skeletal structure is recovered intact, it is disarticulated. Separate piles of collected bones and amassed soft flesh are created. Once transformed, bones and soft tissue are reinterred in the memorial sites.

At these sites the mass grave remains will be joined by bones disinterred from individual burials in formal burial plots, usually created by family

[2] I often call these individuals 'Survivor-exhumers' in order to emphasise the link between their work on the exhumations and their identities as Tutsi genocide Survivors

[3] In Kinyarwanda it means 'to remember'

members some years beforehand. Bones are also discovered in shallow informal burial, sometimes they have been discarded or hidden by perpetrators, occasionally the remains were abandoned and became concealed by soil or brush. Once discovered, the remains are expected to be turned over to the memorial sites.

Research Objectives

This research set out to understand the actions and concerns of those who discover conflict victims' remains in Rwanda, who must manage them after their discovery, and also of those Survivors who wish to locate the remains of loved ones still missing. Initial research objectives and questions were as follows: What happens to genocide victims' remains that are and have been discovered within and outside of Rwanda? What issues concern those who discover, manage, or who are searching for victim remains? What problems or disagreements arise during the discovery and reburial of victims?

What emerged from these initial questions and the research that followed is the first ethnographic study to look at the human remains which are stored in memorials in Rwanda as they move through the journey from their origins, often as fleshy, even articulated, corpses which are embedded in the soil of mass or individual graves, to disarticulated and collectivised masses of skeletal remains, soft flesh and sometimes personal possessions which are placed within the memorial sites.

The fieldwork completed for this thesis followed the journey of human remains from two mass grave sites in Rwanda over eighteen months of participant-observation. I attended the opening of the mass graves, worked with exhumers as they transformed the substances located in the graves, and I took part in their final placement within the memorial sites.[4]

[4] Participant-Observation was accompanied by both formal interviews and numerous informal conversations. I gained a basic knowledge of Kinyarwanda in the field. Conversation took place in Kinyarwanda, French and English. Further information is provided in Chapter Three.

These human remains were exhumed and transformed in the hands of genocide Survivors, with the process initiated and overseen by state officials. These exhumer- Survivors and state officials, as well as the human remains and associated items entangled in this space were the main informants for this study

The first field site was a mass grave located on the edge of Rwanda's capital city Kigali, at a memorial site called Nyanza. The second was a rural site in the far south of Rwanda, on the grounds of a Catholic Mission known as Cyanika.

The Mass Grave at Nyanza

On the outskirts of a relatively wealthy and rapidly expanding suburb, a steep and dusty road winds up into hills which overlook the capital city, Kigali. Just before the suburban sprawl becomes semi-rural villages, a red mud track set to the left of the main road meets the gates of a large compound, the Nyanza memorial site. A new two storey building, the offices of an associated NGO, is set into an incongruously manicured expanse of grass. The buildings initially shield four large mass grave crypts from view.

The exhumations I attended here opened up the four brick-lined mass grave crypts which were set into the gently sloping field behind the NGO buildings. A large number of the dead placed inside these crypts had been killed very close to the graves, at a rubbish tip which had sat just next to these fields. In 1994, hundreds of Tutsi from the suburb below the hill, along with Tutsi residents of a temporary refugee camp in the vicinity, had been forcibly gathered together and marched to this dump. Here they were executed by members of the Rwandan National Army (FAR: *Forces Armées Rwandaises*). The executions were witnessed by a crowd from the local community, who reportedly heckled and stoned the captives.[5]

[5] Information drawn from research informant accounts and African Rights (2001)

The bodies lay on the hillside at Nyanza for days, perhaps weeks before they were removed. Accounts of who did this work and how the work was undertaken are vague but the consensus is that the Red Cross, in collaboration with other Survivors, constructed the four brick lined pits, most probably in the months following the RPF's securing of the city. Into these pits were placed the remains, many with little ceremony.

Over time the pits also became the site of burial for hundreds of other bodies. These had been recovered from roadsides and properties in and around Kigali once people had felt it safe enough to return and carry out the removals.

Because most of the remains had been buried hastily, the bodies in the graves at Nyanza were often bundled up in a variety of makeshift shrouds including sheets, tablecloths and blankets. Although not all preparations were quite so rapid, the presence of piles of decayed wood shards suggested that there may also have been coffins. The trappings of everyday life that had accompanied the living to their death were often still visible, everyday possessions and clothing spoke to the suddenness of death and of burial. Intermingled with all of these remains was the occasional *panga* (machete), and the unfortunate appearance of a grenade. These were stark interruptions in a tangle of otherwise domestic materials.

The Mass Grave at Cyanika

The dusty road from the southern town of Nyamagabe runs out of town for several miles through agricultural land eventually passing through the settlement of Cyanika, before it winds its way on into the hills beyond. The settlement of Cyanika is small but sprawling. As the traveller first passes the sign for the village a very large church is perched on an embankment on the left hand side. Next to the church is a busy area clinic, also a primary school. On the opposite side of the road to the church is the district secondary school. This area is a relative hub for activity, belying the small size of Cyanika village itself which is a little further along the road at the

bottom of an extremely steep hill. The church at Cyanika became a refuge for Tutsi fleeing the violence in 1994, as it had been in the waves of attacks against Tutsi which had taken place in the years previously.

Hints of what was to occur at Cyanika had been apparent in the rural villages in the area for several years prior to 1994. Between 1990 and 1993 there had been spates of accusations in which people were charged with supporting the Rwandan Patriotic Front and imprisoned. There were many active anti-Tutsi groups in the area: Marion, a genocide Survivor who spoke at a memorial service, recalled the groups meeting on the football pitch, a big square open field to the side of the road between the church and the village.

As soon as the news broke that Rwandan President, Habyarimana, had been killed in 1994, many people moved into the large Catholic church. These groups came not just from the village of Cyanika but from many villages around the area. How long people sheltered in the compound is difficult to establish, but they were resident in the building and on the grounds long enough to need to creep out in order to check on their houses and cattle. Later on this became more and more difficult as the *Interahamwe* began to camp outside the church.[6] The refugees began to run out of food and the number of people and lack of water made for very poor sanitary conditions. Early in the morning of the 21st of April people who had escaped the massacre at the technology college at Murambi also began arriving at the church. They reported that a very large number of people had been killed at the college.

At six or seven the same morning, the *Interahamwe* arrived and began to kill anyone close to or attempting to move outside of the church grounds. Blocking the gates to the compound as best as they could, the refugees moved inside the church buildings. By eight in the morning the soldiers

[6] The *interahamwe* roughly translates as 'those who stand together' or 'those who work together'. The group were a youth civilian militia initially created by the MRND in the 1990s. The group were responsible for very many of the genocidal killings.

had arrived at the gates. In the early afternoon they broke through the gates and began to throw grenades into the compound, killing many people who had gone outside and attempted to hold off the attack by throwing rocks at their attackers. The militia eventually broke into the church where those gathered, mostly unarmed, were not able to defend themselves.

Julia, had taken refuge in the church with her parents. Her parents were at some point killed, as was the father of Marion, the genocide Survivor who had provided the testimony of the events. Julia managed to hide in the eaves of the clinic that is located next to the church buildings. At some point in the night or the following day she left her hiding place and along with several other people ran into and through the fields behind the church buildings. She spent weeks, perhaps months afterwards wandering the area, occasionally being taken in by sympathetic families (she was seven years old). By six or seven in the morning, Marion reported, most of the people in the church and grounds were dead, and she was hiding under a pile of bodies.

I have little information about who moved the bodies after the event. Some people loosely ascribe this activity to the authorities that were put in place after the event. Some say that a priest arranged their burial. What is clear is that in the weeks after the events two deep pits were dug at the back of the compound into which the bodies were piled. It is possible that remains from other places around the district were also buried here. A white marker stone was placed on top of the graves. And the bodies of a priest and his family who had been killed during the violent events were also placed with a little more decorum in coffins which were buried at the top of the graves.

At Cyanika the mass graves sat behind the church buildings undisturbed until the exhumation in 2011.

Ethnicity, Conflict and Genocide in Rwanda

On April 6th 1994 President Habyarimana of Rwanda and President

Cyprien Ntaryamira of Burundi were killed when their plane was shot down close to the Rwandan capital, Kigali. This event is often attributed to be the spark that began the genocide, during which an estimated 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu were murdered. A long and complex road of political and social history led up to this event and the explosion of violence that followed it. This thesis picks up the thread of that history throughout, although here I will offer some directional summary.

Making Ethnicity Identity

Des Forges (1999, 1) succinctly describes the constitution and social hierarchical structure of Rwandan society in 1994 thus:

> The nation [Rwanda] of some seven million people encompassed three ethnic groups. The Twa, were so few as to play no political role, leaving only Hutu and Tutsi to face each other without intermediaries.

The Hutu/Tutsi dichotomy of ethnicity is a lynchpin upon which genocide methodology and intention was hung. In one way or another, commentators on Rwandan history ascribe Rwanda's troubles to the generation of mythical histories in relation to ethnicity, and its connotations for rights to land and other resources.

Prunier (1995) roots the origins of this destructive narrative in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries:

> Rwanda, a very small, compact and historically well-defined nation, was built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century into a complex, unique and quasi-mythological land. With time this cultural mythology *became* reality,
> i.e. the social and political actors moved by degrees from their real world into the mythological script which had been written for them (in a way, with their complicity). By the 1940s their lives, their actions, probably their feelings were obeying the logic of the script rather than that of their more complex organic past, which by then was receding into historical unreality. In 1959 the red seal of blood put a final label of historical unavoidability on this mythological construction, which from then on became a new *real* historical framework. (Prunier 1995, Foreward, XIII)

Prunier argues that division of personal identity on the basis of ethnicity was, although fluid in the past, cemented by the administrations of Belgian and German Colonials.[7] As Eltringham points out, 'it would be an understatement to state that the existence of "ethnicity" in pre-colonial Rwanda has become a matter of intense debate since 1994' (Eltringham 2004, 164). This is a debate which grips both Rwandans and historians of Rwanda.[8] Most scholars agree, however, that traditionally, Hutu and Tutsi identity was constructed around an economic basis: the Tutsi identified by cattle, and cattle herding activities, and Hutu as, primarily, agriculturalists. A Tutsi monarchy held supremacy over Hutu, although social mobility was possible and the identities of Hutu/Tutsi could to some extent be blurred and interchanged.[9]

The German and Belgian colonial authorities gave favour to the tall, slender ruling Tutsi elite, who complied with a romantic envisioning of a biblical migration from Ethiopia (Mamdani 2001). As a result the Tutsi were given further superiority over national activity, including tax and working labour systems (Prunier 1995). By the 1930s the ethnic divide was further consolidated by a system of registration at birth: each Rwandan being issued with an identification card detailing ethnicity (Des Forges 1999).

The 1950s saw the tide turn against those Tutsi in power. Feeling their authority increasingly threatened, Tutsi traditionalists resisted Belgian efforts to enforce democracy and by the end of the decade a powerful anti-colonial, pro-monarchist Tutsi group, UNAR (*Union Nationale Rwandese*), was calling for Rwandan independence (Adelman and Suhrke 1999). At the same time Hutu emancipation groups became increasingly active in

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[7] From 1890 to 1914 Rwanda was subject to colonial rule as part of German East Africa. From 1914 to 1946 colonial rule continued with Rwanda assigned to Belgium as a colony. From 1946 to the declaration of Rwandan independence in 1962, Rwanda was a United Nations Trust Territory governed by Belgium.

[8] Eltringham's (2004) book '*Accounting for horror: post-genocide debates in Rwanda'* discusses the form of these post-1994 debates in detail.

[9] This is an incredibly complex history, which given shifting pre-colonial boundaries must also take into account the histories of bordering countries, most particularly Burundi. For detailed discussions see for example, Eltringham (2004), Newbury (1988) and Malkki (1995).

rejecting what remained of Tutsi authority. The Belgian administration had now fallen out of favour with their previous Tutsi allies, and did not prevent the violent skirmishes between both sides: Tutsi fled in their tens of thousands out of Rwanda.

The Hutu nationalist group Parmehutu gained full control over national politics in 1962. Under the Parmehutu administration the Tutsi were further alienated, with their rights to education being restricted and nationalist ideology painting the history of Tutsi rule as dark and oppressive.

In a coup in 1973, Kayibanda, the leader of Parmehutu, was ousted by Major- General Juvénal Habyarimana who introduced a one party state for Rwanda under the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND). The government remained nonetheless Hutu dominated, with the Parmehutu party's domination by southern-resident Hutu replaced by the MRND's domination by northern-resident Hutu.[10]

Although Habyarimana presented his MRND government as one of equality and efficient administration, this public face was maintained through a system of extreme and authoritarian social control.[119] The imbalance of power at this time was not just of the usual urban-rural disparities but also of increasingly evident discrimination against Tutsi and Hutu from areas other than the MRND's favoured northern regions. A system of quotas which was supposed to assure equitable distribution of resources to all Rwandans for example, was used by officials to restrict Tutsi access to employment and higher education (Des Forges 1999, 46-47).

A crash in the coffee market and a drought in the 1980s compounded problems. Public figures, including political leaders began to demand

[10] The complex preceding history to the genocide has been played out on regional as well as ethnic divides, Lemarchand (1970) provides an excellent overview of this complexity.
[11] At the time, the state was lauded as an energetic 'model' state by international donors (Des Forges 1999).

reform and the implementation of greater democracy. In 1990 Habyarimana finally agreed to examine reform, and after considerable pressure it looked as though reform and political change might be possible (Des Forges 1999, 51).

Despite Habyarimana's efforts to arrange proportional representation for the different ethnic groups of Rwanda, Tutsi outside of the country that had fled into exile in the 1950s had grown frustrated and tired of waiting to return, especially as they were often marginalized in their countries of refuge. A group fashioning themselves as political revolutionaries and calling themselves the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), had organised itself in Uganda into an armed invasion, the army calling itself the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA). At its head were Tutsi already powerful and influential in neighbouring Uganda, and with strong ties to organised government in Uganda, including the secret service and the military. Throughout the 1990s the RPF/RPA launched incursions into Rwanda, attacking civilians, meeting armed opposition from the then Rwandan government, and pursuing a programme of political recruitment inside Rwanda itself. At the time that the genocide took place the country was already therefore in the midst of a conflict.

There is now general consensus amongst genocide historians that the attacks were carefully planned over many months by a small number of powerful and extremist figures within Habyarimana's own government (De Waal 1994). If the assassination of Habyarimana on April 4th 1994 was the spark that began the genocide it lit a meticulously constructed pyre. Integral to this success was an ideological hate campaign that consolidated a belief that the Tutsi ethnic group was a deadly threat to Hutu livelihood (Prunier 1995).

Over the course of three months an estimated 800,000 to a million people were killed by soldiers of the Rwandan National Army and by specifically trained youth militia, known as the *Interahamwe*. In addition, communities

which had been exposed to anti-Tutsi propaganda for so many years folded in on themselves. Neighbours, family members, and former friends killed each other. These were frequently extremely violent acts with victims bludgeoned to death with machetes and clubs, shot, and sometimes dismembered.

The genocide of 1994 marked a cataclysmic event in Rwanda, it took place alongside massive population displacement, the largest refugee crisis ever known and the deaths of up to a million Rwandans, many at the hands of people who were once friends and neighbours. The conflict reduced national infrastructure to rubble. The violence completely, often irreparably, devastated the lives of the main informants for this research and that of most of their neighbours. Many suffered violent bodily injury. Almost all lost all their prior means of livelihood and properties, some were displaced from their homes for months or years, perhaps never returning. They also suffered the terrible pain of experiencing the murder of family members, friends and relatives: they bore witness to, and became entangled with a mass attack on groups of people. Much of the shock of the genocide events is located not in the fact that these politicians planned such events but that they were so successful in mobilising Rwandans themselves to undertake the killing. Murders were frequently of people that were known to the attackers, in many cases they were even members of their own family or circle of friends.

As the massacres of 1994 began the RPF was launching a further sustained incursion from Uganda: as they moved forward, waves of people fled in front of the soldiers joining those who had already decided to run from the genocide violence. These people constituted the largest refugee movement ever recorded. Up to a million people moved en masse over the borders of Rwanda into the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and Tanzania.

Despite its success in organising the massacres over the weeks and months of the genocide the interim Rwandan government which had

directed the massacres was weakening. The number of Hutu civilians taking part in targeted violence began to diminish, groups of Hutu began fighting amongst themselves for the resources that remained after the exit of so many people, many began to leave Rwanda for the borders as the RPF pushed forward.

The RPF finally declared victory over the remaining soldiers of the national army in July of 1994. The proclaimed 'liberation' of Rwanda took places as RPF forces claimed occupation of the parliament buildings in Kigali. However, despite claims to victory, fighting continued for many months afterwards, both on the streets of Kigali, and in the surrounding countryside. As the RPF took control of certain areas its ranks were swelled by genocide survivors, many of whom, along with the RPF soldiers, were involved in the perpetration of war crimes themselves in the months that followed.

Even in the initial stages of the violence, the city and surrounding countryside became occupied anew. Following in the footsteps of the RPF was a very large number of Tutsi returnees from exile, many of these from Tanzania and Uganda. These people would often talk about their experience of entering Rwanda in the aftermath of the violence.

Philippe, his wife, and their young child had returned to Rwanda from Uganda as part of a wave of, often, second or third generation Tutsi exiles returning to Rwanda behind the successful RPF invasion in the 1990s. When the family reached Kigali they found accommodation in abandoned houses in the city. This abandonment was very recent, in fact, as Philippe arrived at one door of a house it often appeared as though the occupants could have left from the back door just at the same moment, 'those people did not want to be here to speak to us', he noted. Philippe shook his head as he recalled his first journey through Rwanda. Drawing his hand in wide circles: 'there were so many bodies. And they were fresh! Everywhere!'

Other informants described the months that followed the arrival of the

RPF, as the RPF and the national army fought with each other, the frontlines moving street by street through Kigali. Everywhere became pockmarked by war. The streets remained road-blocked, the buildings damaged by artillery fire. Packs of once-domestic dogs that roamed the streets became literal and symbolic markers of the conflict, its inhumanity and disorder. Daniel laughed as he described running the gauntlet of the night streets to the local bar: "you hear those dogs coming, Howw! Howw! And you run, run, run, like this, over fences. I jumped those high fences! Quickly, before they catch you!" he joked, as his friends laughed at his exaggerated facial expressions.

There was a real fear, justified in some cases, that the dogs had been eating the bodies of the dead that still littered the streets. This echoed the scenes across Rwanda where the dead had frequently been thrown into pits, rapidly placed in mass graves, or hastily interred in shallow burial. Very many bodies had been left abandoned at the sides of roads. Even these most obvious corpses were sometimes not moved for weeks, even months after their deaths. There was nobody to move them, or civilians were too afraid to be associated with them, and anyhow, as informants indicated, even if they could move them, what would they do with them?

I was in Rwanda almost twenty years after these events took place. I arrived at Nyanza just as the concrete lids of the crypts were broken open. In front of me an elderly woman had moved in front of the crowd and was standing on one of the remaining slabs and peering into the crypt. The slab had an unhealthy crack running through it but she was ignoring the coordinating official's pleas for her to move back from the edge. She peered at me from her vantage point. "How are you?" she asked in Kinyarwanda, a standard greeting for strangers. I replied that I was fine and asked how she was. The elderly woman, Ada, screwed her face up in displeasure and swept her hand pointedly across the open crypt. While I cringed at the scolding, Ada stalked off into the crowd.

Human Remains After Conflict

The exhumation of mass graves created during conflict, and the recovery of human remains that received perceived improper burial during conflict, has become a frequent feature of post-conflict national activities. The return of the bodies of the dead to relatives and the appropriate commemoration of the dead where the usual funerary rites had not taken place has become a critical aspect of post-conflict reparation and reconciliation efforts. There is a large literature on this subject, including many very detailed ethnographies of the form of these activities. Renshaw (2011), for example, has published on the exhumation of the dead of the Spanish Civil War and of the concurrent struggles over the memory and materials associated with those remains. Sant Cassia (2005) has written on the attempted recovery, and the ongoing absence, of Greek and Turkish Cypriots declared "missing" after hostilities between Greek and Turkish Cypriots in the 1960s and 1970s. In Argentina, Crossland (2000) examines the exhumation of human remains from Argentina's "Dirty War". Wagner (2008) focuses on the massive forensic identification project that has been undertaken in Bosnia, in the work of reuniting Bosnian Muslim victims of the Srebrenica massacres with their families. The recently published edited volume by Ferrandiz and Robben (2015) contains papers with an ethnographic focus on mass grave exhumation from a variety of locations including Chile, Korea, Peru and Greece.

At each of these sites the issues that face exhumers and those waiting to receive the exhumed are nuanced and complex. The work of finding identity anew for the dead in the aftermath of an end marked by the absence of the usual funerary rites and rituals is different in every incidence. The form of the work undertaken and the ways in which identity is ultimately reinstated, or generated, for the remains is dictated by local understandings of life after death, and often directed by the interplay between national political stakeholders in a process and the wants and

desires of those who actually handle the remains at the gravesides and in the communities where they may eventually be buried. In the cases above, there has been a marked focus on the reuniting of identity with remains: work is frequently drawn towards an attempt to bridge the gap between the loss of the individual person and the body, or remnants of the body, that lie before the exhumers.

In Africa, detailed ethnographic studies examining mass graves of conflict have been limited. Recent work with regional relationship to Rwanda has focused on the exhumation and reburial of human remains from conflict in Northern Uganda (Jahn and Wilhelm-Solomon 2015; Meinert and Reynolds-Whyte 2013). From Zimbabwe, Fontein (2009, 2010, 2014) writes on the ongoing exhumation and contested constitution and identity of human remains deriving from conflict. Of particular interest is the manner in which the forensic work has frequently remained absent from these sites, despite its ubiquity across other high profile grave exhumations after conflict worldwide. This absence is often concurrent with the difficult and contested presence (or absence) of the individual identities of people associated with these remains, and the varying ways in which the dead are then located amongst, or disassociated from, exhumed human remains.

This dissertation focuses on post-conflict mass grave exhumations, but with a particular and very detailed focus on the unique and innovative techniques undertaken in the process of the Rwandan exhumations, which were conducted almost entirely in the absence of forensic scientific technique. In doing so, this study both contributes to the rich body of literature on post-conflict exhumations world- wide, and to an emerging interest in this subject within the scholarship of Southern and Eastern Africa.

The exhumed bones and human remains of the victims of conflict in Rwanda have received attention from scholars interested in the placement of these remains inside the country's memorial infrastructure. Although some studies have focused on the presentation of the bones specifically (for

instance, Guyer 2009; Hitchcott 2009; Cook 2004; Lesley 2015; Jessee 2010; Gourevitch 2014), others reflect upon the remains within broader discussions of the process of memorialisation and of memorials in Rwanda (for example, Meierhenrich 2011; King 2010; Friedrich and Johnston 2013; Ibreck 2013). This attention has tended to focus on the function of these remains as a facet of memorialisation efforts. These scholars most frequently see in the presentation of the remains a problem with specificity, arguing that although the human remains communicate the horror of mass death, they do not necessarily communicate the particularities of the event as a genocide. Scholarship focuses on whether the form and content of these memorials, particularly given the extensive use of material remains of the genocide, should be understood as part of an agenda of 'healing' and reconciliation, given the very strong emotions that such memorials evoke (for example, Guyer 2009; Cook 2004).

As the tide in Rwandan scholarship has increasingly turned to a critique of the RPF and its practice of governance, so have attentions turned to the way in which the state uses the memorials to undergird that authority. Erin Jessee (2010) raises concerns over the way in which the broader Rwandan community is able to express opinion in relation to the exhumation and inclusion of the remains within memorials. Within their broader texts which focus on the politics of the RPF, Reyntjens (2013), Buckley-Zistel (2006b) and Thomson (2013) have all commented on the state's repression of a great divide in opinion across the breadth of the Rwandan population as to how these remains should be handled, and whose remains are anyhow interred within these sites.

The fieldwork for this thesis constituted the first work alongside the Survivor- exhumers who actually undertake the work of unearthing and transforming these remains. Through a detailed observation and interrogation of the practices that are used in this work and through a close entanglement with the remains themselves, this study moves on from a focus on viewing remains as artefacts contained within a memorial. Via an

engagement with the human remains themselves and with the people who hold the greatest stake in their presentation and transformation, this doctoral thesis fills a gap in present understandings as to the reasoning behind, and the significances of, the presence of human remains inside these memorials. In engaging with these human remains and with the people who are concerned with the dead of genocide, this thesis also speaks to conversations around the genocide dead in Rwanda, and the ways in which they are present or absent in fields of both public and private memory.

This thesis draws inspiration from scholarly studies of 'new materialism' (Bennett 2003; Ingold 2007), picking up on threads of discussion which examine the special nature of corporeal substance (see for instance Special Issues edited by Fontein and Harries 2013a; and Carsten 2013). I have found a particularly useful focus in those studies which consider human remains in the context of these new approaches to materials (Bernault 2010; Krmpotich et al. 2010; Fontein 2014), as well as work which examines the entanglement between substances of the dead and the work of the modern state (see Stepputat 2014; Ferrandiz and Robben 2015).

The following section outlines the structure of this thesis. The chapters unfold rather as the exhumations did, binding together the process of opening the graves, removing and transforming the substances found within, and finally discussing the commemorative placement of the remains in the memorials.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter Two of the thesis engages with recent work on memory scholarship and its relationship to memorialisation in Rwanda. I argue that memorials broadly conceived should be thought of as 'knots of memory', drawing upon ideas posited by Rothberg, (2010) as a concept which moves away from the notion of a 'memory site' as proposed by Pierre Nora

(1989). Understanding memorials in this way is particularly useful to the Rwandan case and to drawing out the significance of human remains to the memorials, as it allows a critical consideration of the substance of agents, material and immaterial that are entangled in the process of expressing memory.

In the second section of this chapter I discuss the ways in which state governance post-genocide affects the character of public memory of the genocide in contemporary Rwanda. I conceive of this state memory work as a kind of archive, compiled by the RPF, and composed of a vast landscape of tangible 'evidence' of genocide. As an attempt to project control over an otherwise unwieldy state the archive has an odd character - the state both professes the archive's ability to capture the horror of the genocide event in its totality, just as it also admits that totality is both impossible to capture: an excess which is a critical proof of that horror in itself.

The bones and human remains are situated oddly in this archive, a situating which can be unpacked by an examination of the process through which substances removed from the mass graves become human remains, and in which human remains become part of, or generative of (albeit problematically), this memorial landscape.

Chapter Three of this thesis is concerned with the methodological and ethical issues that arose during this research. Although it is unusual to include a chapter in a thesis which focuses on methodology the particular pressures and problems of undertaking this work necessitated a detailed discussion. I argue that, given the sensitive political economy and the difficulties of conducting research in this context, participation in the exhumations offered access to information that could not have been attained through conversation or observation alone. Alongside this discussion I also reflect on the experiential process of working with human remains, in this case in the context of vernacular exhumations undertaken by relatives of the deceased. These reflections serve as an integral part of the discussion that is

developed in the remainder of the thesis.

Chapter Four then turns to discuss the story of the main informants for this research, the genocide Survivor-exhumers. Drawing on participant-observation fieldwork, formal interviews and informal conversations I discuss the broader lives of the Survivor-exhumers. I set out the ambiguities of the genocide Survivor status, what it means to adopt the label and to live with it and through it in the everyday in this context. I discuss this category of identity as simultaneously a mode of citizenship and an identity emerging as a complex form of kinship binding together these people, and the RPF Tutsi elite, most of whom arrived in Rwanda post- genocide. Using a particularly poignant moment at the gravesites I point out the ways in which the exhumers wield elements of the genocide Survivor identity and call out aspects of the relationship between the elite, the Survivors and the dead which speak to the unsettling nature of human remains as materials.

Chapter Five of this thesis is built around a detailed description of the exhumation events at Cyanika. When the graves were opened, the bodies that were removed were often little more than tangled bone and scraps of decayed material. Occasionally more substantial corpses were removed where these had been preserved by the packing together of bodies unprepared for discrete burial. The work of the Survivor- exhumers therefore was not, initially at least, the confrontation of a familiar or recognizable dead body but a struggle to bring clarity to the contents of the graves. Much of the initial work of transforming or of "washing" the remains comprises a laborious searching, disentangling, and negotiating of category for these things which emerge from the indeterminate exhumed mass.

It was essential to the exhumers that this process be understood as new and unfamiliar. The malleability of the human remains that we recovered from the graves was both distressing and useful. The relative absence of whole and coherent bodies and the presence of powerful substances in place of

that wholeness opened up space for innovative action and outcome. I discuss the ways in which this work is entangled with contemporary mortuary technique, and find alignment between Rwandan concepts of the body and the body of the world as substance in 'flow' or 'blockage' and that of scholarship which argues for an approach to the world of materials along similar lines. I use observations drawn from this analysis to pinpoint the ways in which the inherent plasticity of the things drawn from the graves means that the human remains emerge as slightly different objects/subjects in the hands of the exhumers, and of the state, despite their claims of affinity between those aims for the exhumed dead.

Chapter Six: The corporeal remains of victims of genocide and conflict matter hugely to Rwandans. Many expend great anxiety and resources in locating, managing and reorganising these bodies. Yet alongside this draw towards the remains of the dead there is divided opinion over how these remains should be handled, particularly where they should ultimately be located. Across the broad spectrum of Rwandans the inclusion of victims' remains in state memorials, and especially in their current variation of forms – disarticulated, collective, anonymous, sometimes visible – is an extremely controversial and emotive issue. Yet bodies continue to be moved into these sites and with little public debate accompanying that work. In this chapter I address this issue, first examining the state pressure upon Rwandans to carry out the work of memorialising the remains. I also argue that there is often a pragmatic reasoning behind the inclusion of the remains in the memorials, particularly for the genocide Survivors I worked alongside. The fragmented and incoherent nature of the remains removed from the mass graves, the frustrations and grief caused by missing bodies, and the material remnants and mementos of the individual dead that are available are catastrophically entangled with violence and rupture. Managing the tangible remnants of that violence/violated persons, and locating a meaningful place and constitution for and of the dead is an ongoing struggle for genocide Survivors.

Chapter Seven: In this chapter I bring together the threads of analysis found in Chapters Two to Six in order to contemplate the situation of the exhumed human remains once they are interred within the memorial sites.

Contemporary genocide commemorative services in Rwanda that involve bones and bodies of the dead echo the structure of Rwandan funeral practice. Just as funeral rites serve to articulate and attempt to resolve liminal personhood (and broader social instability) in the event of death, so these memorial performances bind together the work of remembering genocide with the identities which are emerging in its wake.
During the service on the grass outside of the memorial buildings the 'body' of the dead is both symbolically bound to the body of the nation and its ruling elite, and becomes part of the performance of articulating belonging (or marking degrees of estrangement) between groups of people and the 'new' nation of Rwanda.

Inside the memorial, at the point at which the exhumed human remains become entangled with the ritual process, this attempt at symbolically settling the dead into their new role begins to collapse. Inside this space, ordered and prescribed forms of narrative begin to fall away. The human remains are uncanny: they frighten and evoke a sense of dread amongst the attendees. The bones fail to fully embody a settled and dignified dead. The bones profoundly unseat the security of all that is known and knowable, revealing the fragility of the meaning of things and thus the relationship between the people and the objects that are assembled in these moments.

Chapter Eight: offers some closing thoughts for this work, including a reflection on the future of the remains and some broader applications of this project to the issue of post-conflict exhumation.

Chapter Two: The Genocide Archive

Introduction

Early on in my fieldwork I visited state-led genocide memorials located across the four main regions of Rwanda. I wanted to know if there was a pattern to their architecture and function: what did the memorials consist of? Were they well maintained? Were they accessible and attended to, and if so, by whom? In the South, West and East of Rwanda there are many memorial sites. These are relatively well known, often purpose-built and maintained to some degree. I found it more difficult to locate memorials in the North of the country. Online documentation mentioned a memorial on the edge of a town, in the foothills of the North Rwandan border with Uganda. The latter site, a cave, was the subject of some controversy. A massacre had occurred inside the cave during the 1990s but no official genocide memorial had been associated with it. A rumour rumbled around that the cave had been ignored in the state's memorialisation work because the cave's occupants had been killed whilst hiding from an armed incursion by the RPF and were not Tutsi hiding from *génocidaires*. Many such stories were associated with the North in which relatively few Tutsi had been located in 1994 but through which the RPF had launched its various incursions throughout the 1990s, including the final siege of 1994.

> In the town the manager of the local hotel knew of the cave and insisted that two of his staff (Peter and Benjamin) accompany me. On the outskirts of town the entrance to the cave is located off of the main road, around the back of half - constructed school buildings. We walked between scrubby beds of vegetables and peered into a broad and deep pit in the ground. The small entrance to the cave is set into the wall at its base.
>
> An older child acts as the informal guide for tourists and he runs home to retrieve a large torch, a donation from an earlier visitor. The cave, was a long dark tunnel, with an entrance at either end.

The cavern, it transpires holds some record for its unbroken length. It also houses the largest colony of bats in East Africa. The interior is cathedral-sized, the base a rocky obstacle course of heaped boulders. Missing a step between the boulder leaves your feet sinking ankle deep into

stinking bat droppings secreted by hundreds of thousands of screaming bats which hang upside-down from the ceiling vaulted roof and swoop in and out of the entrance. Minutes into our journey the torch battery fails. The cave is absolutely pitch black with no natural light reaching the interior and we spend the remainder of our forty minute scramble by the light of a wind-up torch that I've found in my bag.

The guides show me a second, very small tunnel entrance set into the wall of the cave with the insistence that this is the rumoured, 'secret' route through which the RPF entered Rwanda in the 1990s. The caves, according to Peter's account, reach through the mountains and emerge in Uganda.

At the far end the cavern opens out into undergrowth which sits at the base of a steep sink hole. Benjamin points out some broken cooking utensils and what looks like a patch of burnt ground. It seems a well-rehearsed routine. Peter and Benjamin translate for the guide and tell me that people hiding in the caves were killed when soldiers threw grenades into the opening. The younger guide is shining the torch at the floor, which is littered with shards of bone. From behind a rock he produces several long human limb bones. I suspect he has stored these at the site for other visits similar to mine as after the initial dramatic flourish his performance slides into listlessness. Whilst Peter, Benjamin and I talk about the site and its history he upends the femur and props it under his elbow as if it is a walking stick.

EDITED FROM FIELDNOTES, FEBRUARY 2011

In the twenty years since the genocide took place, the state, supported by international organisations and sympathetic Rwandans, has engaged in a massive project to memorialise the 1994 genocide. I discuss the constitution of that state-led memorialisation in this chapter.

By way of preface to that discussion in the section below, I will discuss recent work on memory scholarship and its relationship to memorialisation in Rwanda. I then focus upon the links between Rwandan state-led genocide memorialisation and national governance in Rwanda post-conflict, and reflect upon the role of the international community in supporting the drive for memorialisation as part of an agenda and vision of 'development' for the country. This is familiar territory for recent Rwandan scholarship and I place these issues here in order to frame the political stakes at play in the work of 'conserving proof of genocide'.

In the final section I reflect on the landscape of memorialization in Rwanda. By 'landscape' I mean all of the many artefacts that are consciously conserved as *kwibuka* (memorial items; lit. trans., souvenirs) or what is thought of as 'proof' of the genocide, for example: mass graves and the human remains contained within them, photographs of the dead, tattered victims' clothes and other personal possessions; architecture bearing traces of violence - the buckled gates of the Church of Nyamata memorial site or the bullet-ridden buildings of the Parliament; digital and paper-text recordings of testimony of violence (including *Gacaca* court records); and more recently, quantitative data and other statistics which claim to accumulate scientific evidence of the number of dead.

Bones and corpses are a particularly controversial aspects of this memorial archive. Human remains do not subscribe to the will of the state in quite the same manner as other memorial items and yet they are essential, both to the power of the post- genocide archive, to the identity politics that are entangled with it, and to the broader work of establishing sovereignty. As I will discuss in the following chapters, the exhumation and integration of

human remains into this archive is risky but also essential, and potentially the most productive exercise in the state's memorial agendas.

Knots of Memory

The extensive volume of published literature documenting the history of the 1994 genocide and associated war has formed an integral part of conflict reflection. Much of this work tackles theories of causation but the last decade has brought an increasing focus upon the emerging historiography of the conflict. The shape of collective memories of mass violence and of war are always contentious but the content and the application of post-genocide memory and memorialisation has become a particularly heated issue in Rwanda, impossible to separate from equally heated debates around the propriety of national governance.

The human remains that are the focus of this thesis are always exhumed with the aim of placing them inside memorials dedicated to the genocide. (Although they may be stored elsewhere temporarily, placement in the memorials is always claimed as the ultimate intention.) Memorials are special elements of national projects of memorialisation: they are constructed as a meeting point for both material and immaterial memories associated with the conflict. These are particularly loaded sites, as Jay Winter reminds us, because they are carry both political ideas and are frequently spaces at which individual loss and bereavement is expressed (Winter 2014a, 78-116).

The aim of a memorial is to 'fix history': 'They provide stability and a degree of permanence through the collective remembrance of an event, person or sacrifice around which public rites can be organized' – this is why, Pierre Nora argues, memorials, and other 'memory sites' (*Les Lieux de Mémoire*) are produced so prolifically following periods of societal upheaval (Tilley 2006, 500-512, citing Nora 1989, 500).

Nora predicates an argument about the proliferation of *Lieux de Mémoire* in modern times upon the idea that 'real memory' or 'real environments of

memory' has slipped away from contemporary life *(Les Milieux de Mémoire)* (Nora 1989, 7). Modernity is the culprit for this loss of continuity between the past and the present. The mechanics of present-day society has extinguished 'spontaneously actualizing memory, a memory without a past that ceaselessly reinvents tradition'. The kind of memory that was found in the routine enactment of ritual or the commonplace narration of myths of ancestors. In place of this 'lived memory' is present day history: 'nothing more in fact than sifted and sorted historical traces'. In this understanding of modern memory (or lack thereof), the memorial is the ultimate 'trace' of the past. It refers to the past without belonging to it, but it also does not belong to the present with which it resists assimilation (Tilley 2006, 500-512, citing Maleuvre 1999, 59) . In Nora's case these representations of a past hang together to form a collective memory of France's history, a shared heritage of experiences and values, and thus the scaffolding of contemporary French national identity (Nora 1989).

Nora's definition has been criticised because the accumulation of work which supports his theory does not attend to aspects of France's past which would otherwise undermine his assumption about the presence of a French nation as a given (Ho Tai 2001, 910). As Ho Tai (2001) argues, the selection of topics focused upon in Nora's 'Realms of Memory' shape how the relationship between history and memory is conceptualized throughout this collection.[1] This is exemplified by a lack of acknowledgement of the critical shaping of French history by those drawn into that space by the expansion of the French empire. What is ignored is what could be termed 'peripheral' history, history which is not publically presented or clearly enshrined in these mainstream memory sites but which nonetheless have a profound influence on present-day collective identity. In fact, Ho Tai argues, such influences rather undermine the idea of a coherent French national identity which otherwise reveals itself to be the preserve of a state

[1] Ho Tai comments here exclusively on 'Realms of Memory', the English translation of the French version of the same volumes. It is particularly in the shedding of certain articles in the move from the French to the English version that Nora strengthens his argument, but by seemingly excluding those texts which otherwise complicate his claims.

elite.

In order to maintain this account of a coherent collective history or heritage Nora appears to allow a persistent 'fuzziness' in his use of the term 'history' and 'memory'. As Ho Tai points out, his statements about the unfolding of sites of memory in fact often contradict his claims, revealing the polarised distinction between *liuex* and *milieu* to be untenable (Ho Tai 2001, 919).

The notion of 'memory sites' has been extremely influential but what has preoccupied memory scholarship over the decades since the publication of Nora's work is the form and extent of this necessary blurring of the boundaries. The texture of the continual exchange between history and memory that takes place in and around these spaces. There has been a focus on the extent to which impositions of narratives of history constructed by the powerful merge or are opposed to 'marginal' or 'peripheral' memory. As Chris Tilley writes on the 'new memorialization of the past' and monuments in particular, these debates often identify memory 'as the pre-modern that, *contra* Nora, we still discover in the ethnographic periphery or as 'real- life' experiences of the poor, of minorities, and the oppressed' (Tilley 2006)

It is this idea of a clash between the imposition of a version of history by the Rwandan elite, and the 'resistance' or push-back of marginalised memories of the conflict which has become the focus of so much work on commemoration and memorialisation in Rwanda. There has been valuable effort on the part of scholars to emphasise the diversity of memories associated with genocide and war, and the lack of consensus as to how and whether that past, both state-led and marginal, should be historicised.[2] Amongst Rwandan commentators, the concern that past violence directed against the population by the RPF is conveniently 'forgotten' by

[2] See for example, discussions in Special Issue of Material Culture edited by Rothberg (2010, 7), also De Jong and Rowlands (2008).

memorialisation efforts is of course a critical element of this debate.[3] However, although the suppression of these kinds of memory is an important issue it is not a surprising circumstance – national memorials and monuments to war always privilege the victors of that war, just as they concurrently emphasise the sacrifice of those whose identities are comfortably aligned with state initiated *Lieux de Mémoire* (see, for example, discussions in Winter [2014a] and Rowlands [1999]). In Rwanda the focus of public commemoration is upon Tutsi victims of genocide and their persecuted surviving kin.

The state does not unconsciously produce this exclusionary memorial scene. It is fully aware of the implications of the specific framing used at these sites but, broadly speaking, meddlesome memory is not rejected as a kind of irrelevant 'fuzziness' attributable to otherwise peripheral memory. Instead it is channelled into an understanding that all impositions of this kind are the preserve of anti-government Hutu extremists. Rather than softening the certainty of narrative attached to memorials and thus memory of the conflict, any obvious attempt at countering mainstream memory has become part of the means to strengthen the veracity of claims to a 'truth' held within these spaces through an appeal to a moral differentiation between public history and the threat of oppositional claims. In the past decades this opposition to the content of public memorial efforts has been characterised as a historical revisionism through the criminalised act of 'genocide denial' (Reyntjens 2013, 57-97) . The detailed evolution and content of the state's preoccupation in relation to memorialisation is discussed in the next section of this chapter, in the meantime I turn to a discussion which sets out the manner in which 'memory sites' are approached in this thesis.

Many thousands of memorial spaces exist in Rwanda. These are not just the

[3] Des Forges (1999) and Reyntjens (2013) both comment on this issue in detail although I draw out
many more examples in the course of this thesis.

deliberately encoded spaces of genocide memorials and associated ephemera but also informal memorial spaces which are not purposively inscribed with memory but still hold meaning for Rwandans who experienced the conflict. Meierhenrich (2011) proposes an adaptation of Nora's concept of '*lieux de mémoire'* in understanding the full range of memorial space in Rwanda in the present day. His analysis draws upon research which entailed visiting and photographing several thousand memorials in the country.[4] The forms of memory and space that Meierhenrich proposes identifies two 'ideal subtypes' of memory and of memorial space which can be plotted onto a matrix, allowing a mapping out of the shape of tangible memorial memory in Rwanda. At either end of the two extreme ends of memory sub-types are placed 'privileged' memory and 'under-privileged' memory, referring to the public formal state-led narratives of the genocide in the former case, and 'private' or less public memories of the genocide in the latter. Along another axis is plotted on one side deliberately encoded memorial spaces, on the other side 'incidental' spaces of memory – those sites whose creation was not immediately instrumental but 'emerged spontaneously on expressive grounds'. Contained within these fields, Meierhenrich argues, should be the entire gamut of 'memory sites' in Rwanda (2011, 286-287).

The matrix is useful, because it allows a clearer understanding of the spectrum of memorials which could or do exist across the present day landscape of Rwanda. However, I've found the categorisation of memorials in this way is limiting. I don't see that locations at which the memory and history of the genocide and associated conflict can be understood as purely spatial locations, nor as clearly tied to particular notions of privileged or under-privileged memory. Each memory site instead cuts across categories of memory and includes both spatial, material, immaterial and temporal dimensions which together meet to form something close to what Rothberg (2010) has called '*noeuds de mémoire'* (knots of memory). Rothberg pitches this idea not as an addition to the

[4] http://www.genocidememorials.org

notion of '*lieux de mémoire'* but as an entirely different model:

> A project oriented around *noeuds de mémoire*, on the other hand, makes no assumptions about the content of communities or their memories. Rather it suggests that knotted in all places and acts of memory are rhizomatic networks of temporality and cultural reference that exceed attempts at territorialisation (whether at local or national level) and identitarian reduction. Performances of memory may well have territorializing or identity-forming effects, but those effects will always be contingent and open to resignification (Rothberg 2010, 7)

> [N]*oeuds de mémoire'* are knotted intersections of history and memory that cut across categories of national and ethnic identity, institutions of knowledge-production, nation-states, and many embattled communities to discover evidence of cosmopolitan impurity (Rothberg 2010, 7)

Rothberg refers here to a reinvigorated model as applied to France but there are important connotations for considering this model in application to Rwanda. I am less interested in the idea of a model which cuts across categories and more interested in the idea of a model which allows for the reality that these categories are constructed, fallible and subject to continual shift. The idea of *noeuds de mémoire* does not assume an act or location of memory reinforces a particular category of identity, rather it allows the attempted ascription of identities upon, or caught in the act of manipulating those spaces to rise to the surface.

Furthermore, 'knots of memory' allow a consideration of the substance of agents, material and immaterial, that are entangled in the process of acts of expressing memory. Rothberg (and the authors contributing to the Special Issue to which this is an introduction) emphasise that 'memory emerges from unexpected, multidirectional encounters – encounters between diverse pasts and a conflictual present, to be sure, but also between different agents of catalysts of memory' (2010, 7).

Applying this model of memory to the subject of the Kanzenze Bridge, which Meierhenrich marks up as an example of an 'incidental' and 'under-privileged' memory, throws up certain useful

questions. The bridge is a notorious location in the history of the genocide, the point at which thousands of people, presumed Tutsi, both dead and alive were thrown into the Nyabarango River (now named 'Akagera') with the declaration that they would be returned to their mythical origins in Ethiopia. Considering the bridge through the lens of space and categories of memory does not reveal anything about the relationship between people and the bridge however, simply that the bridge continues to exist and appears to have been 'forgotten' by the state which had not at the time of Meierhenrich's publication marked the site with a memorial. We don't know whether those with 'under-privileged' memories of the site would want the site to be remembered, and in what way. What is it about the structure of the bridge which prompts memory? Has the state truly dismissed the importance of the bridge or is something else taking place at the critical point at which the government decides to construct a new modern bridge next to it? In fact, shortly after the publication of Meierhenrich's paper the state put in place a memorial wall, a solid block of polished concrete upon which the names of those believed thrown into the river is inscribed. The memorial has become the source of some frustration for officials as names are frequently surreptitiously scratched off for reasons unknown.[5] The memorial, 'encoded' with a particular and famous genocide narrative, has become overlaid with tangible marks of a marginalised version of history.

It transpired that there was no need for us to have taken the difficult, dark, and bat- ridden route through the cave in order to reach the clearing that contained the bones. We could have walked across the fields at the top of the site and scrambled down through the vegetation at the side of the sink hole into the cavern's entrance at the far end. But the guides had decided that I would want to reach the site via this route as part of my experience.

[5] Interview with CNLG Official, Kigali, June 2012

Similarly, it was my presence I suspect, which resulted in the younger guide producing the bones with such flourish. International visitors to Rwanda have frequently sought out 'dark' places of various kinds and this is not lost on Rwandans. This is not entirely about conjuring up a captivating narrative. The cavern is also part of the story of the people who died at the site and elements of the cave draw out aspects of what would otherwise be marginalised or concealed memory. So, for instance the group point out a very small tunnel (probably five feet high) which is set off at an angle from the interior of the cave. They tell me that this is where the RPF secretly entered Rwanda during the 1990s. It is highly unlikely that an army arrived in Rwanda through this small tunnel, but it is not unfeasible that RPF soldiers used the cave as shelter during those campaigns due to its proximity to the Ugandan border. Understanding this to be the case then raises difficult questions about who the bones the guides produced in the cave belonged to.

The site is a 'memorial' however, and a massacre did occur here. How that story is related to me is shaped by the presence of other memorials, those 'encoded' by the state. At Nyamata (as described in the introduction) the bones are placed carefully on shelving with considerable work upon them having taken place beforehand, the amalgamation of the clothing inside the Church, the presence of the guide with a rehearsed story, the accompaniment by a security guard armed with a club, all suggest that something weighty, even risky is contained in these spaces. Here that sense of the uncanny is also present but it is strangely off-kilter. The history produced by the guides is unsettling both because of the idea that a violent event took place and because of the way that the bones and site are presented as emotively impressive and yet somehow disconnected from that broader narrative. No signage in the cave explained what had occurred here. The only information came from the guides who informed me that a massacre had taken place. The haunting atmosphere of the crypts was not present in the same way. Instead the bones were something else, shocking because they were human remains suddenly present, disorientating because

they were presented with no context. Perhaps the bones evoked a sense of violence by being here in fragments, scattered across the soil of this damp and overgrown cave; however, any potential solemnity would have been bizarrely juxtaposed by the actions of the younger guide who leant heavily on the leg bone in order to better jab a finger at a small bundle of tiny animal skeletons on the cave floor. He asked me if I knew what these were, whilst chattering on about how he thought they were hunting birds, all the while his foot scuffing over some of the (presumably human) bone that littered the floor around him.

Privileged and under-privileged memory, the site as an encoded or incidental space, the identities that are represented in this space, the relationship between these acts and objects and 'national' memory and history, even my arrival to this scene as an international visitor and as an ethnographer, are elements tightly bound together to produce meaning for that site at that particular moment in time.

In the next section I look specifically at the RPF's framing of national history, and of narrative around the genocide in particular. I place an emphasis on this in order to set later discussions around the emplacement of privileged and under-privileged memory, both intangible and tangible (in the form of material remains) as events set against a background of a pervasive control over the public recounting of the past. The extent of this control and the manner of its enforcement shapes the presentation and positioning of human remains in very important ways. It is entangled with, and yet a very strong influence over, the ways in which private and recalcitrant memories and materials are expressed.

The Rwandan Patriotic Front and Post-Genocide Narrative

The public nature of the events of 1994, media accusations of abandonment by international jurisdictional organisations during the genocide massacres, and the tangible and widely circulated evidence of extreme and untempered

violence generated a surge of interest in Rwanda and a rush to attend to the needs of victims. As a result, the late 1990s in Rwanda was marked by a massive monetary investment from the global community, and hosted an enormous influx of development organisations.

Over the course of the transition period (as defined by the Arusha Accords) that followed, the RPF transformed itself from a military organisation (the Rwandan Patriotic Army, now the name for the military wing of the government), to powerful force within the intermediary government, to elected head of state. It has attempted to put into practice the politically democratic ideals that it proclaimed at its inception, and has aligned activities with broader conceptual notions in the model of societal transition from a state of conflict to post-conflict state as appropriate to the language and demands of international agencies and development organisations.

Over the last decade Rwanda has been a much lauded model for post-conflict governance practice by transnational governmental organisations, and by foreign governments, in particular, and it appears frequently in media accounts and development organisation literature as an example of the developmental ideal for resource-poor countries.[6] Although, from the outset the RPA/RPF regime was accused of war crimes by human rights organisations and exiled political opposition (and by some academic scholars), who argued that the organization ignored or directed and then deliberately concealed widespread extrajudicial acts of revenge and pillaging by its soldiers, including mass execution, torture, and the confiscation of land and property both inside Rwanda and in the bordering regions of the Democratic Republic of Congo.[7]

As a recent article in the Economist (2012) entitled ‘A Painful Dilemma’

[6] The Clinton Foundation has been one such supporter (see Tunbridge 1996). As has the Tony Blair Africa Governance Initiative (see Sack and Fink 2015).
[7] See (Blair and Gross 2013), Human Rights Watch (2000), Des Forges (1999), Pottier (2000), Lemarchand (1998) and Reyntjens (1999).

notes, echoing frequent commentary, the difficulty for many international observers is that despite rumours of violence and mounting evidence of human rights violations committed by the RPF against civilians, when considered within the framework for good governance and successful economic development Rwanda appeared to be making great progress under the RPF's governance. This success is in part due to a controversial model for national development. Straus and Waldorf provide a useful summary of this model as:

> a deft authoritarianism that justifies its restrictions on political parties, civil society, and the media as necessary measures to guard against a recrudescence of ethnic violence. … a highly ambitious policy of reconstruction and development that [the RPF] adroitly frames in the preferred language of international donors: good governance,
> decentralization, gender mainstreaming, poverty reduction, rule of law, and transparency (Economist 2012)[8]

This is, as these authors argue, 'a social engineering project with a high-modernist ambitions and tactics that resemble what James Scott (1998) described in *Seeing Like a State*' (Straus and Waldorf 2011a, 4). This is characterised by a high degree of regulation over and surveillance of everyday life which includes, for instance: strict controls over visible signs of poverty;[9] impositions on land-use, or its acquisition and redistribution which disadvantage the poor and marginalised (Straus and Waldorf 2011a, 4); restrictions on free ownership of property and business investment (Ansoms 2008; Huggins 2011); and, as mentioned above, a tight squeeze on civil society which includes the oppression of political opposition, restrictions on free media, and manipulation of civil society representation (Berry 2014). The outcome, critics argue, is a gnawing structural violence with the worst effects inflicted upon the rural poor (Beswick 2010;

[8] See also, discussions in Prunier (1997) and Reyntjens (2013).

[9] The homeless are at risk of detention (field observations, Rwanda, 2011-2012; also as reported by Pottier [2002]). And all Rwandans are expected to fulfil certain "obligations" including wearing shoes, maintaining a clean appearance, and meeting guidelines around the architecture and content of houses Human Rights Watch (2006). Those unable to meet obligations are subject to a fine, often imposed publically at monthly compulsory community meetings.

Reyntjens 2013).

The imposition of a high-degree of social control is not unusual amongst post- conflict nations, but many such countries (Zimbabwe for instance), have been unsuccessful in sustaining any, or at least long-term, public support and monetary investment in governance as a result of those activities. However, the RPF's master work has been its high degree of political acumen, and its ability to leverage lucrative political relationships with wealthy international partners, alongside the production of an externally favourable public image for both itself and Rwanda post-1994 despite the controversy over its activities (Ansoms 2009; Thomson 2011a; Sommers 2012; Newbury 2011; Reyntjens 2013). The status quo with regard to international actors is unlikely to change soon as external investors concerned with on-going governance tactics are now caught in a potential public relations crises. If the tide of public opinion turns against the RPF, years of expensive investment in economy and society in Rwanda would be depreciated and the history of support from high profile political actors will tarnish the image of those figures and their counterparts.

Inside Rwanda, this acumen for manipulating information and its dissemination is also evident. The rhetoric of national development work infiltrated many aspects of Rwandan life, from my informants' reluctance to talk about ghosts and 'Rwandan' illnesses, to the manner in which people spoke about their need to exhume the dead from homesteads in order that land could be 'developed'. Official opinion is extremely influential: for example, prior to the outright ban on the BBC's very popular Kinyarwanda news broadcasts in 2014 my informants were already convinced of the BBC's nefarious character, having been reliably informed by official representatives that through research such as my own their voices (literally recorded) might be broadcast on the radio without their permission, and in a misrepresentation of Rwanda.

Critical to the success of social control, and control over information on and in Rwanda, has been the careful management of public narrative of the conflict and the broader historiography into which this new concept of the nation has been set.[10] This narrative emphasises the heroic nature of the RPA/RPF's 1994 'liberation' and focuses entirely on the events of 1994 and earlier as a Genocide of the Tutsi orchestrated by a corrupt and Hutu-extremist section of the previous interim government. The genocide and persecution of the Tutsi was a real and devastating event but it was set in the context of a complicated and long-running civil conflict which was driven not just by ethnic extremism but also by economic struggle caused by periodic famine, and sustained land shortages. These struggles have caused the frequent flow of people in and out of the pre- and post-colonial borders of Rwanda for hundreds of years, just as those borders also shifted and changed, and the manner in which autochthonous ethnicity and its association with sovereign rights to rule were frequently redefined (see Chapter One for discussions, also Reyntjens 2013, Chapter 7).

There is an inevitable directive towards a history which lends itself most favourably to the RPF's strongest supporters, the new and powerful urban, largely 'old case load' Tutsi returnees from the diaspora who have benefitted the most from the RPFs economic success and who continue to dominate seats in power within the RPF (Newbury 2005; Zorbas 2004). This group, particularly those who returned from Uganda in the late 1990s are largely cut off from the rural population beyond their status as patrons of business and charitable ventures. Even amongst those organisations which admirably attempt to chip into and open up wider debates across wealth divides in Rwanda, free conversation is tempered by participants' ascription to a certain discourse of speech, one which pledges support to dissolve inequality and alleviate hostilities between Rwandans but which also inevitably reaffirms the RPF's present statute of power and vision for the future without questioning the framework of that enterprise (Beswick

[10] See Sommers (2012, 83) for the first, and still the most detailed description and analysis of this narrowing of, and control over, the content of public historical narrative.

2010).

In many respects the successful imposition of such narrative is a facet of armed conflict which fragments collective memory, particularly where that event involves such extreme levels of intimate bodily violence and when it has taken place on such a wide scale.[11] Beyond a publically legitimate narrative (such as heavily prescribed narratives expressed at the Gacaca community courts and at Genocide memorial events) discussion about the past is a subject for private conversation between familiars, if at all. As with the situation in Spain for over 40 years following the conflict, that proportion of the population with the most intimate knowledge of the violent events of the past is often complicit with this programme of 'chosen amnesia'.[12] This extends beyond the conflict and into the aftermath, not least because many do not feel the conflict is over.

Academic commentary on Rwanda largely agrees that key to the effective control of public narrative, and the successful imposition of national agenda has been the tying together of histories of governance and conflict with notions of morality and its alignment with ethnic identity (Buckley-Zistel 2006b). Key to this has been the public de-legitimisation of ethnic identity by the government. The proclamation of ethnicity as an identifying category, and associated offences (often loosely defined) was made punishable as part of the Law Punishing Genocide in 2003 (Hintjens 2008). It is productive precisely because such categories continue to be a lived form of identification amongst the Rwandan population. Through removing conversation about ethnicity and condemning it to legitimate conversation and analysis only in the context of history, the RPF has not only successfully tied the identities of Hutu and Tutsi to corrupt or superior moral categories respectively (those of perpetrator and victim), but has further reinforced the publically accepted (if privately debated) notion that these identities are clearly defined categories with distinct characteristics attached to them.

[11] See discussions in Das (2001)

[12] On Spain see Pottier (2002) and for a comparison between Spain and Rwanda see Renshaw (2010)

This tactic has been useful to the RPF partly because it assists the party's claim to legitimacy as a partisan political party. This is not because senior officials deny their history as Tutsi exiles. In fact political rhetoric frequently refers to the origins of officials and the organisation in exile as a means of demonstrating their affinity with a persecuted population. The position is instead put forward as a means of arguing for the RPF's commitment to democratic values, including a lack of prejudice against elements of citizenry. This sits very well with the international stakeholders in Rwanda's economy. The act, by virtue of definition, appears to address a root cause of the Genocide and amongst development elite who so very recently demonstrated an understanding of ethnic violence as part of the 'dark heart' of Africa. The move appears to eschew what are perceived to be old and corrupt ideals in favour of a state model that is progressive.

The RPF uses its privileges as a liberator to shore up claims to a particular form of memory. Although at first look control is about the public image of the party, below the surface the RPF must retain a certain narrow character to memory in relation to the past. It must make full use of its privileges as a force in opposition to the abhorrence of genocide in dictating the form of history post-conflict. Using such rhetoric the RPF defines itself as a morally superior force, and negates all public suggestion that it is, or that its soldiers have been involved in violent, rapine activities of their own. This clashes with many Rwandans understanding of the RPF's history in Rwanda, regardless of their political persuasion or private ethnic identification.

The RPA incursions of the 1990s were viewed as an invasion and not a 'liberation' by the majority of the incumbent Rwandan population (Hutu, Tutsi and Twa). As an armed force, largely composed of first and second generation Tutsi exiles, its status did not sit well with Rwandans. To Hutu, the invasion and the constitution of the army lent credence to the fierce assertions by political extremists within the government, that this was a declaration of war by Tutsi hostile to Hutu. For resident Tutsi, claims of

autochthony by the incoming RPA were problematic, as the army had tenuous links to local familial networks. Furthermore, violence against those Tutsi resident within Rwanda escalated as a result (Human Rights Watch 2008, 34- 41; Straus and Waldorf 2011).

Support for RPF rule in Rwanda is muted although some of the informants for this study, were unusually public in their proclamation allegiance to the party. Under the surface, the topic of governance elicits a quiet reserve amongst some, and amongst others an angry if silent resentment.[13] Removing public conversation about ethnicity is also a subtle form of control. If all citizens within the nation are Rwandan subjects of that nation, and not Hutu and Tutsi and Twa, then a degree of resistance against state order is lost.[14] If ethnicity cannot be publically proclaimed then it is not available as a lens through which Rwandans may articulate identity and perhaps voice persecution on the basis of that identity.[1515] Similarly, political opposition which might garner popular support through its identification with a particular group in Rwanda (the majority Hutu for instance) are only able to do so subversively and potentially tainted by a proximity to morally murky waters.

[13] The RPF, in particular, its military officials are not unaware of this, in fact much of the RPF's drive is an effort to maintain the current status quo. The party also works in readiness for that status quo to break. I was quite taken aback when an informant, a neat and softly spoken university student and genocide survivor told me that she had spent the weekend completing military circuits and learning how to use a rifle. Jeremy, a medical graduate, confirmed that camps were organised for some university students to attend, particularly those with scholarships, almost always genocide Survivors. The purpose of these camps was to teach the students about 'the Rwandan nation', and furthermore to equip them to defend their families if 'the enemy' should come again. He was concerned that I understand his position, that this was part of his responsibility to his family (he was very soon to be married) and that thanks to the government he would not be defenceless against future attack, as his relatives had been in the past.

[14] Notably the imposition of a ban on speaking about Twa identity is less rigorously adhered to. An informant had even registered a charity with the government that aimed to provide financial assistance to an impoverished Twa community - simply replacing the word 'Twa' with 'potters' (a vocation traditionally associated with Twa).

[15] Or indeed voice frustrations over what privately may be seen as the unfair privilege to which Genocide Survivors are allowed (see Chapter Four).

Morality and Governance

The field of opinion amongst scholars writing on Rwanda, has been an argument between those who see government efforts in relation to ethnicity as reasonable in the face of an undercurrent of hostilities between Rwandans who continue to live in close proximity regardless of interpersonal violence during the conflict and those who see the government's work purely in terms of quashing public opposition to social control through a moral defamation of the entire Hutu population.[16] This is a sticky issue, and there are often overlays between the implication of blame based on ethnicity and the RPF as a political party attempting to distinguish itself from the leadership of the past, for example, in emphasising the morally corrupt nature of past leadership through its oft repeated assertion that the genocide was caused by 'bad governance'. This proclamation appears to avoid levying blame on a category of individuals based on ethnicity. However, when set within the context of the broader state-sanctioned narrative of history the opposite is achieved, an implication that corrupt morals and poor leadership were responsible for the Hutu- dominated Habyarimana government's turn to genocide.

This manipulation of categories of identity and the moral characterisation which is aligned with those identities propels forward the historical framework that the RPF promotes. There is a temporality associated with this imagining which is important to keep in mind. In this positioning the recent past is framed as a place of total moral breakdown. As a new nation Rwanda is placed on a trajectory, which, through appropriate governance and 'proper' moral conduct is propelled towards a utopian state.

Development agencies and the broader international community have been amenable to this position, much of the complicity with the RPF's demands may be driven by guilt following the lack of international intervention into

[16] Compare, for instance, the authored papers in Straus and Waldorf (2011b) and Mosley and Clark (2014)

the events running up to and during 1994 . There is more to this affinity though, as development work carries a strong moral tone and preoccupation with nation-building. The agendas of 'post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation' as writ into the work of these organisations is often allied with the nation-building desires of the RPF.

The Genocide of 1994 underpins this work, both as a historical event and as a conceptual category (Des Forges 1999, 51-57; see also Prunier 1995, 108-114) drawing on Allen (2011) points out that the problem with genocide as a concept is that the word 'genocide' can 'slide from its wider, legally specific meaning, to a branding of the perpetrators' group as collectively evil'. Once the situation has been qualified as genocide, understood to be the worst of all crimes, any questioning of its content is tantamount to denying the crime. Tim Allen and de Waal's debate in this case is about whether or not labelling the violence in Sudan a genocide would assist in stopping the killing and prosecuting those responsible. There is no question that what took place in Rwanda in 1994 was a genocide, but one of the unintended consequences of that event is the distinctly moral enterprise of remembrance, reconciliation and post-conflict governance.

Defining an event as genocide is often either part of, or as a result of, the ability to define a clear beginning and ending of an event (even if that is an illusion). The 'intent to destroy' is tied to a particular group of persons, with intentions embedded in a specific time period, usually a period of governance. There are armed conflicts with less clearly defined parameters, fragmentary and intermittent conflicts with peaks and troughs over time, with apparently multiple groups of perpetrators and victims not so easily defined – of which the conflict in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo would be a good example (de Waal 2007).

The maintenance of the Genocide's history is a matter of some urgency for the RPF. On one level this is an acquiescence to the requests of many Rwandans who want their suffering and that of other Rwandans to be

remembered. But these desires of bereaved and violated Rwandans are also tightly interwoven with the need for political survivorship. Drawing on the forms of Genocide as a concept as outlined above, the act of remembering the Genocide, setting the development of life within Rwanda in terms of the Genocide and the narratives that stem from it, also obscures the tenacity of the wider conflict within which that event was set.

Rwandans who lived through the violence, including the informants for this research, struggle to see the conflict as beginning and ending in such definitive terms and time frames, just as the work of clearly defining themselves and others as Tutsi or Hutu is not simple but an on-going process without finite resolution. In Rwanda, national histories would be challenged by a remembering of the broader context of the violence as occurring cyclically over the last century. The constitution of that broader event does not situate the RPF in a flattering light and undermines the present vision of a country on the 'up'.

There is an urgency to this work of memory in which the complexities and contradictions of making history are evident. For in as much as it is necessary to historically enshrine the Genocide of 1994, the event cannot slip too far into the past, it cannot be 'forgotten', since forgetfulness would undermine the moral impunity and power of the government and its agendas.

The increasing significance placed by the RPF on the emergence of 'genocide ideology', I would argue, is in part born out of this conundrum. It makes something productive of this tension between remembering and forgetting. The same law which dictates the illegality of 'ethnic ideologies' also permits the prosecution of those who harbour 'genocide ideologies'. This section of the law, in particular, has been heavily criticised by external observers, not least because the criteria for its transgression are not clearly defined and therefore, it is alleged, it can be used to persecute a wide range of offenses. This includes the prosecution of those who threaten Tutsi survivors or circulate ethnically 'extremist' propaganda, but there have

been arguments that it is also used to threaten, detain or discredit Rwandans whose acts are judged to have undermined the government (Straus and Waldorf 2011).

Maintaining the presence of the genocide within the rhetoric of day to day state activities deposits the memory of genocide at the heart of animate governance and makes high stakes of any threat to historical revisionism. This is a difficult issue given that much of the conventional work of post-conflict 'reconciliation' efforts, including those which have been pressed upon and initiated by the RPF, demand an interrogation of truth and are often closely associated with a request for the production of evidence.

One of the key collaborative activities associated with the 'reconstruction' process in Rwanda and heavily supported by the international community was the *Gacaca* community courts (which closed in 2010). Modelled on 'traditional' justice systems, the courts took place across Rwanda at sector level for ten years during the 2000s. The courts were designed to be a grassroots, community managed, system of trial and prosecution of alleged perpetrators of crimes that took place during the 1994 genocide, including murder, rape and theft of property. The *Gacaca* courts have been an extremely controversial project. On the one hand the courts mobilised judicial and reconciliatory systems that were otherwise overwhelmed by the hundreds of thousands of Rwandans detained following the war and by the need to address violence committed often at a household level in almost every residential community in Rwanda. On the other hand, it was exactly such widespread, complicated, and intimate forms of violence that led to a sustained questioning of the integrity of the Court process (Human Rights Watch 2008; Straus and Waldorf 2011; Dalporto 2012). In particular, critics argue, in such an environment it is only a state-sanctioned and thus very narrow version of truth, and one which serves those in power that can be obtained (Clark 2010, 2014b; Bornkamm 2012).

There has been a sustained pressure on Rwanda, as there has been on other post- conflict states, to prove the validity of national claims to past events. This, 'fixing' of history, is in fact the driving force behind the work of memorialisation and the production of monuments (Thomson 2011b; Ingelaere 2009). As this section of the chapter has argued in relation to Rwanda, genocide in particular demands 'evidence' of the truth of its existence, in part because the conceptualisation of the event in that way, and the attendant mobilisation of state power in its aftermath are in many ways governed by the validity of that claim. In the section below I discuss the manifestation of those claims to truth in the form of tangible evidence of the genocide, ultimately I will argue that there is an ambiguity at the heart of attempts to contain such evidences, in that their validity and effectiveness rests on their being inherently more than can be contained. This observation has particular consequence for the manner in which human remains are handled as part of this archive of evidence.

The Genocide Archive

Paul Richards (1993) argues that during the heyday of the British Empire it was impossible for the British administration to manage all of its territory. Instead, the empire's administrators became obsessed with gathering exhaustive knowledge, or at least facts, about the area over which it claimed ownership. This vast archive of knowledge was intended to project a notion of control over a landscape that was so large and remote that in most cases it would have been impossible for literal occupation to have taken place.

I discuss below an archive of similar endeavour that is being accumulated by the RPF government. In this case the act of occupation and of control is not over an empire as such but over a topography of knowledge as it relates to the genocide of 1994. This is not a literal archive, a single point at which a collection of papers or significant objects is brought together. As Richard's helpfully explains in relation to the British Empire:

> The [imperial] archive was not a building, nor even a collection of texts, but the collectively imagined junction of all that was known or knowable, a fantastic representation of an epistemological master pattern, a virtual focal point for the heterogeneous local knowledge of metropolis and empire (Harris 2012, 149)

Rather like the imaginings of the British Empire, through this accumulation of information, the genocide, as an event, becomes a tangible landscape with breadth and substance. This archive though, unlike that of the Imperial archive, is a projection of control over a period of time, over a history, albeit one whose ultimate intention is control over land and people.

The buoyancy for this project is the fact that the genocide does need documentation, that there is a moral imperative to make the violence that was committed by genocidaires a matter of public record, particularly as secrecy was often both a weapon and a method of protection for those carrying out the violence.

Things included within this 'archive' include the official locations of remembrance, usually mass graves and sites of massacres. Personal possessions of victims (clothes, jewellery, wallets, rosary beads), weapons, photographs of victims, memorial walls, remembrance gardens, photographic exhibitions and archives, written and oral narrative accounts (now, themselves being extensively digitalised in an archive created by the AEGIS Trust[17]), films (both fictional and documentary), genocide remembrance conferences, purple ribbons, t-shirts with anti-genocide slogans, the massive sponsored 'remembrance' billboards that every large business pays for during the commemoration months, reams and reams of reports, books and statistics produced by the state, and the bodies of the victims themselves.

Testimony provided by genocide survivors is frequently recorded digitally and stored in various archives or broadcast on the radio or television. These

[17] https://www.aegistrust.org

rehearsed narrative experiences are written down and included in memorial displays, NGO documentation and in literature. More frequently, information is provided in the first person, spoken out loud at commemorative and remembrance events, and produced for journalists and researchers. The words are sometimes shaped into verse which is sung (a more traditional form of storytelling). In this sense the bodies and memories of the survivors could be seen as an integral part of this archive as well.

Verne Harris describes an archive as follows:

> one, a trace on, or in, a surface; two, a surface with the quality of exteriority, and; three, an act of deeming such a trace to be worthy of protection, preservation and the other interventions which we call archival (Richards, 1993, 11).

The archive in this sense is a storehouse, a places where traces of past events are assembled, categorised held, and, in theory, can be brought into service for certain ends.

Nyamata, the memorial I have described in the introduction, is an example of an element of this archive. The clothes of the victims have been recovered from the mass grave and are strewn across the floor of the Church. The altar remains, along with a blood-stained alter cloth (now also dusty). The buckled gates have been left in place. The impression is intended to be one of scale and of absence, and of a moment frozen in time. It is a constructed moment however. The clothes have been recovered from the earthy grave in which the bodies were tipped shortly afterwards and the clothing retains the orange-red of the soil. It is unlikely that the benches and other structures of the Church remained in place when the people crowded inside. The bones themselves, one of the of the most affecting aspects of the building receive intensive pre-preparation before their display.

There are subtle differences between an accumulation of *kwibuka* (souvenirs of the past) and *lieux de mémoire.* ‘Spaces of memory’ are

somewhat flat reflections or representations of the past. This is a gathering of things of substance. These are more than just representations of the past, their effect over people is more than just a trigger to remember. In a sense it has to be because these traces are always filtered via prior memory. Part of the nature of this archive is that it is always in a condition, as Verne Harris points out, of being meddled with, as part of its very nature.

> When I returned to Rwanda in January 2012 and arranged to meet again with Matthew (an Official working within the Department of Memory and Conservation at CNLG) his offices had been relocated away from the main CNLG buildings and into a new extension of the Commission which would house a national archive of Gacaca records.
>
> The two-storey building, set on a busy main road, had yet to acquire any signage and perhaps this was intentional, an attempt to be mute as befitting a high security building. The effect was the opposite however. A building that appeared important was shrouded in mystery. It was a large beige elephant in amongst the bustle and multi-coloured paintwork of a shopping district. Entrance required navigation past high steel security gates and accompaniment by an armed escort across the large and expensively paved courtyard to an inner gatehouse and security clearing area.
>
> On the ground level of the building were the offices of CNLG researchers who, I was told, would work with the archives and coordinate other research activities. The upper levels of the building would store the *Gacaca* court files. These files were being moved from the regional government offices where they had been stored since the end of the *Gacaca* court processes. In this building they would be gathered together in one place, an essential project, Martin explained, in order to preserve and catalogue them. As we moved through the corridors I caught a glimpse of the building room by room. Archive boxes were stacked floor to ceiling of every inch and it appeared as though room was running out even though the project had only just

> begun. Staff wielding clipboards were squeezed in between the stacks of boxes and scrawling their record details onto paper, whilst others were shoving and restacking even more boxes. Each day more and more records arrived, explained Matthew. I wondered how the offices expected to contain all of the court case records. There had been around a million *Gacaca* court cases at the point at which the system closed in 2010.

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Here is a perfect example of an element of this archive. There was an acknowledged need to bring together, 'to conserve', a vast stock of information. However, bringing together the documents in this way is also a function of arguing that the archive is at risk. It is feasible that someone would want to destroy this documentary record of confessions of, and witness to, alleged criminal activity, but it was also important to this state that this archive be defined as at-risk. Only the truth is worth threatening. This archive, containing the papers from events in which 'truth' of a particular kind was professed is a moment in which truth and evidence of the most contentious form meet each other in tangible form, and are held in this building, a concretised form of state power and its reach.

This intense concern with preservation, with retaining 'proof' and protecting it, filters down through all divisions of the large government ministry responsible for this and all other artefacts relating to Genocide.

The National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide or CNLG, is a Government Commission with its own offices and large operational and administrative resources. The infrastructure of CNLG is one of rapid acceleration. As my fieldwork came to a close in the late months of 2012 a group of state officials operating at district level had been added to the regional and national 'Officials of Memory and Conservation'. I met with several of these new officials. The group had a very specific list of tasks, including the management of mass grave memorials (their exhumation,

consolidation and upkeep), the investigation and acquisition of alleged victim's bodies from shallow or family burial, attendance to the security and wellbeing of genocide survivors, what amounted to the licensing of genocide survivor meetings, the organisation of events to take place during the memorial month programme, and the provision of information to researchers, journalists and others seeking information about the Genocide.

In addition, and alongside this, the group was engaged in the intense work of procuring, producing and cataloguing information relating to the genocide and its objects. At the time of my visits most were wrestling numerous spread-sheets, the preserve of a project which aimed to catalogue the numbers and details of all dead and missing Tutsi in each district. This is in some ways a curious project. The exact number of Tutsi killed during the 1994 massacres will never be known - many Tutsi families fled Rwanda during these months, left no record of their departure, and have not returned. Often bodies were deliberately disappeared or destroyed, those who were 'disappeared' are no longer part of the living memory of community members. More broadly, an association with the identity 'Tutsi' as a clearly defined category is a relatively recent phenomenon and remains unsettled to this day (as discussed in the introduction). During massacres witnesses recall heated debates over the ethnic identity of an intended victim.

The project's intended outcome has also already been scooped. CNLG's own website declares the exact number of the dead to be 1, 074, 017. Given the issues outlined above, the exactness of this figure is simply impossible. This number, which has obscure origins, echoes the unfortunately impossible exactitude of the reported numbers of dead exhumed from mass graves. These remains are, without fail, reported in national news in very specific quantities, even though this cannot possibly be accurate information. The form of the remains would preclude easy assessment of numbers, and I did not witness an attempt to count them.

The work here is clearly part of a work to project a sense of power over

information, over facts. Numbers are extremely important to the process of deciding whether or not an event is labelled a genocide, and the issue of numbers (of dead and wounded) tends to haunt the reporting of such events afterwards, these also often inaccurate numbers.

The documentation efforts of the officials will undoubtedly contribute to the work of estimating the numbers of the dead but their work is not about quantitative assessment but about the act of gathering information. Rather like Richard's argument that the aim of the British Empire's archive was an attempt to demonstrate a comprehensive scope of knowledge, arguably the intention here is to declare a certain and complete knowledge of the vast Tutsi dead. The acquisition of materials, catalogued and coded, of 'evidence' which relates to genocide.

Conclusions

As I have argued in the very first section of the Chapter, 'memory sites', should be considered as 'knots' rather than spaces. At these sites, spatial, material, immaterial and temporal dimensions of memory are entangled with categories that include 'national and ethnic identity, institutions of knowledge-production, [and] nation states …' (Rothberg 2010, 150). Here at the 'memory sites' of the Genocide Archive in Rwanda, these issues of identity and state knowledge production are critical. As I have argued above, history and historiography in Rwanda is a site of great tension. In the service of a particular version of history, these collective traces of a violence attributed to Genocide are brought together in the service of the envisioned 'new' nation.

These 'knots', critically, are 'places and acts of memory … [as] rhizomatic networks of temporality and cultural reference that exceed attempts at territorialisation' (Rothberg 2010, 7). It is this sense of 'excess' that is harnessed by the state. In a tangible sense, in the *Gacaca* documentation that is so vast it overflows the space it has been allocated. In ways which were more abstract, such as the certainty with which exact numbers of the

dead of the Genocide were stated, even as those numbers were known to be an impossible estimate. If I asked about these kinds of issues, officials would welcome this as an example of the horrors of genocide, of a violence that simply could not be quantified, even as the same officials still went about the business of filling in spread-sheets. In this sense this is a rather special archive. It has an additional layer of complexity, it projects a sense that the history cannot be captured just as it also claims a certainty of knowledge over that of fact.

This sense of things in 'excess', particularly in relation to numbers was projected by the state in relation to human remains. In a most basic sense, for instance, in the ways in which the numbers of mass grave dead are publicised. But also in the frequent insistence of officials that the decaying bodies, buried in mass graves, or placed in memorials but not recently attended to, were in a continual state of potential disappearance or decay. This is an entanglement of a tangible problem, the decay of the body of the deceased and of a synonymous entanglement with the real material and troublesome nature of human remains as things which determinedly refused stabilization as meaningful things. A status amplified by the violence with which they were associated (Major and Fontein 2015).

Yet, it is with exactly these properties, and in exactly these entanglements, with the past that human remains in the Rwandan memorials become more than Mbembe's (2003) bleak indicator of the modern states wielding of power over death as a statement of sovereignty. In the following chapters I elaborate upon this complicated presence. I turn to the opening of the graves and to the attendants, the survivor-exhumers who will be the handlers of these remains. I discuss their complicated relationship to the state, to this ongoing construction of genocide history, and to the dead and their remains.

Chapter Three: Haptic Research

This chapter is concerned with the methodological and ethical issues that arose during this research. In reflecting on these issues I argue that participation in the exhumations offered access to information that could not have been attained through conversation or observation alone. Alongside this discussion I reflect on the experiential process of working with human remains, in this case in the context of vernacular exhumations undertaken by relatives of the deceased. My thoughts here also serve as an introduction to my analysis of the significance of human remains as materials which can be found in later chapters.

Beginnings

As the conflict and genocide of 1994 unfolded many corpses were dumped into rivers which flow out of Rwanda. Graves reported to contain thousands of bodies can be found on the shores of Lake Victoria in Uganda, on the Tanzanian banks of the Ruvuvu River in Tanzania, and where the Nyabarongo River meets the borders of Burundi. In 2009 there was a surge of media interest in the mass graves in Uganda as the Rwandan government campaigned for the exhumation and 'dignified' reburial of what had been hastily buried bodies. I have written a postgraduate dissertation on this topic using newspaper reports (Major 2009).

I left Scotland for Rwanda in January of 2011 with a plan to conduct doctoral fieldwork examining mass graves located on the borders of Rwanda. My multi-sited fieldwork planned a focus on the Ugandan graves but I would also spend time in Burundi, Tanzania and Rwanda. I began with an introductory trip to each country. The sites were not easy to find as formal paperwork detailing their location was not available, public knowledge about their whereabouts was vague and state officials were reluctant to assist.

I found one of the three mass graves located on the shore of Lake

Victoria in Uganda. Historical media reports named the general area in which the grave was located but I searched the villages for some time without any luck, until a group of people fishing at the lake shore recognised my wish to see 'the Rwandans'. A motorbike guide was despatched to the dusty scrubland behind one of the villages where an incongruously green grass field was surrounded by a high wire fence. The gate was padlocked but slabs of stone could be seen marking the top of the graves (see Image One). I was told a local businessman maintained the site I was told but that he was only in the area occasionally. I left Uganda without much further information.[1]

In Tanzania, I only knew that the graves were on the Tanzanian side of the river and very close to the Ruvuvu border post with Rwanda. A chance encounter with a street trader at the border provided contact with a man, called Eveready. He lived in the neighbouring town and had led the recovery and burial of corpses. Eveready, now the lead for a local district project with Christian Relief, was keen to discuss the graves and the recovery of the bodies and to show someone the documents and photographs that he had carefully stored for two decades. In 1994 and 1995 Eveready led a team of Tanzanians in the recovery of bodies from the river, using a small boat to fish out corpses with hooks and nets as they fell over a waterfall from the Rwanda and entered Tanzania. The dead continued to appear in the river for many months after the worst of the massacres inside Rwanda in 1994 and the team spent an extended period of time living by the riverbank waiting for the dead to arrive.

The graves in which the recovered corpses were interred are located in an area of bush at the top of a steep hill overlooking the border post. In amongst the undergrowth a walled area marked the pits (see Image Two). Everready had not seen the graves for some time and looking at my

[1] In the media the bodies were reported as being exhumed and reburied but later research revealed that Ugandan authorities had denied permission to open the graves. A Rwandan official told me that by way of resolution, concrete had been set around the graves without taking the bodies out, although nobody could explain how this had been achieved.

photographs remarked with sadness that promised funds for the memorial had not materialised, in the meantime some of the metal fencing had been stolen, and the site had become overgrown. Recently the Rwandan authorities had inspected the gravesite and promised to return with a schedule for improvements (my later research revealed that the government wanted to exhume the bodies but were not yet permitted to do so). Unlike the bodies buried in Rwanda, and under instruction from a Swedish NGO which had conducted some initial training, the corpses had been swaddled individually in thick plastic sheeting before their burial, with clothing and personal possessions intact.

Shortly after my return from Tanzania my research permissions in Rwanda were issued. I then began my work in Rwanda. I trawled through the cave I describe in Chapter Two, visited the memorial site at Nyamata (Chapter One) and talked formally with NGO and government officials about the memorials and mass graves. I kept thinking back to the sites in Uganda and Tanzania.[22] All of my initial work seemed to point to interesting questions that needed to be asked in Rwanda, about what the Rwandan state and Rwandans wanted to do with these remains (if anything), and why the situation at these external sites was so different to that of mass graves in Rwanda where many bodies were in frenzied motion, unearthed, transformed, frequently observed and handled by the living. Shortly after my trip a new contact invited me to attend the opening of the crypts at Nyanza and access to the exhumation itself swiftly followed. Because the work in Rwanda escalated into a participant-observation process that seemed to offer answers to my initial questions I did not return to the graves in Tanzania and Uganda. I have often thought about those burials on the Rwandan margins and about the bodies there, largely unseen, buried deep in quiet fields and scrubland.

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[2] Rwandan officials had mentioned graves in Burundi in the same media reports as those discussing the Ugandan and Tanzanian graves but further research in Rwanda revealed that nobody seemed to know if there were any specific mass graves containing Rwandan genocide 'river bodies' in Burundi. In fact, there may not be graves that can be differentiated from those containing bodies of Burundians killed during the violence that occurred concurrently and these graves are scattered along the length of the border.

Violence and Research in Rwanda

Post-genocide Rwanda has become a very popular focus for scholarly research. The extreme nature and scale of the violence during the conflict, opened up to the wider world by an intense media focus, shifted the country from the periphery of research interest to a site of intense documentation in the study of violence and causality, post-conflict 'reconciliation', and personal and social recovery after trauma.

Although Rwanda has recently been praised for its well-organised infrastructure, accessibility of public records and facilities that are amenable to international visitors (there are many shops and services in place to serve the large expatriate community), the country's apparent order and placidity is set in a context of extreme, and arguably authoritarian, state control over daily life. Researchers have frequently been caught between a drive to interrogate government practice and its effect on Rwandans (which is relevant to almost every research study) and the extension of that state control to research activities. The challenges that this presents are not insurmountable and in the discussion below I outline the ways in which my methodology and ethical conduct approached these issues. Alongside this, and perhaps more significant methodologically, is the need to recognise the population's recent and on-going experiences of physical and structural violence.

During my two years of residence in Rwanda the research permissions process for prospective international researchers was in transition (see Jessee [2012] for an overview of these regulations). The policy had been met with dismay by many researchers, particularly those working on issues susceptible to state disapproval, Many saw the policy as an opportunity for the government to exercise greater control over research and the dissemination of findings. The new contract between the state and permitted researcher required copies of raw data be given to the government.

There were complaints that the permissions process had been used to intimidate or ply research assistants with state propaganda. Rumours about state hostility towards researchers was a frequent topic of conversation in the field. For instance, circulating between researchers were fears that the state refused permission to visitors of certain nationalities or due to an association between a researcher and an academic organisation that had published work critical of the RPF.

Scholars working in Rwanda during the RPF regime have published their grievances and concerns over the extent of government intervention in their work and lives in the field. Thomson (2010), and Reyntjens (2013), along with organisations such as Human Rights Watch (2014) have described deliberate interference, including harassment by state officials or covert state employees and intimidation of informants. I was often warned by researchers in Rwanda to expect difficult relations with state officials or that my data and communications with other people would be secretly monitored and tampered with. Several researchers had felt quite extraordinary measures necessary in order to avoid state suspicion or in efforts to protect their work from falling into government hands, including elaborate plans to conceal raw data, and avoiding discussing research over the telephone or in emails under suspicion that these were covertly intercepted by the state.

Obtaining Rwandan authority permission for this research was time-consuming but not difficult. I was not charged a prohibitive sum of money, nor to my knowledge were my informants or research assistant contacted and the state has not asked for copies of sensitive interview data or field notes. Anthropology, arguably, carries an advantage in relation to research permissions processes given that an ethnographic focus often entails entering the field with a theme but not necessarily with the assumption that a particular set of objectives will emerge as relevant or accessible. In this case, a broad approach to the research topic and the luxury of time allowed me to negotiate association with a local NGO that often worked in

partnership with the government on issues around conflict reconciliation. Staff within the NGO helped translate my academic prose into a proposal that employed terminology used by the Rwandan state in relation to post-genocide reconciliation and memorialisation. I had the opportunity to arrange meetings with government officials in order to talk over a proposal before applications for research permissions were submitted and eventually issued by those officials.

In some respects it is not surprising that my research proposal met with little query from the government. I proposed extensive observation of the management of the bodies of the victims of the genocide with an emphasis on understanding the intention to 'restore dignity' to the remains. The primary informants for the research were intended to be genocide Survivors involved in memorial activities. In this sense my work was very closely aligned with state concerns; I wanted to witness the scenes of violated genocide victims, subjects of the state intentionally drew international observers towards.

In other ways, the lack of concern was confusing. The topic sat perilously close to the issue of civilian deaths and associated mass graves that the RPF had been accused of concealing, accusations to which the government had reacted angrily (see previous chapter for discussion). Despite the welcome reception I felt rumblings of concern. Rwandan civil society representatives were helpful and positive about the proposed topic of research but our conversations frequently ended with a veiled caveat along the lines of 'be careful with those things'. When I first met formally with the Director of CNLG he asked sternly if I was going to write 'untruths' about Rwanda as other researchers had done before. The sense that this research was close to discomforting for the state was hard to shake off, particularly given the fears expressed by other researchers and this effected the character of later work.

If the government monitored or restricted my research activities that interference was not conspicuous. State officials were frequently very

interested in my activities, arranged introductions to exhumations sites and often insisted on providing transport to and from those locations. Several officials went out of their way to offer guided tours of memorials accompanied by personal and impassioned narrative histories of the sites. On occasion officials suggested that I speak with imprisoned genocide perpetrators and offered to help arrange access. Officials in charge of 'memory and conservation' were frequently genocide Survivors, and my overall impression of these people was that they had a deep personal attachment to the work of memorialisation and, as expected, were politically aligned with the agenda of central government. In her reply to Phil Clark's article 'The Price of Admission' in the Times Higher Education Supplement[3], Erin Jessee argues that the Rwandan state is not necessarily obvious in its intrusions upon research. Jessee's description of intimidation and the eventual denial of permission for her research by the government is one in which the state's actions are often covert and subtle (Jessee 2013). In a similar although inverse vein, I could argue that in ensuring researchers are exposed to highly disturbing histories, and to memorial sites at which the emphasis is not only on the terrible suffering of Tutsi victims but also upon the guilt of foreigners who failed to prevent that suffering, there is an inherent and subtle form of intimidation and persuasion. Robben (1996) discusses the importance of acknowledging both the conscious and unconscious 'seduction' inherent in emotionally charged encounters in the field, specifically in Robben's case in a context in which the narrative is concerned with violence (in his case, Argentina and the contested histories of the 'dirty war'). Adopting the psychoanalytical notion of transference Robben argues that in such situations the ethnographer is at risk of losing the ability to critique or seek out new information, being unaware of their unconscious acceptance of a particular viewpoint as truth. Interactions with government officials in which kindness and courtesy cloak politically partisan acts of persuasion,

[3] The article is no longer available online, but see Clark (2014a) for Phil Clark's response to the criticism received following publication of 'The Price of Admission' (Clark 2013).

and in which officials themselves are highly motivated to maintain an uncritical position is particularly problematic. Much has been made of the lack of critical discussion amongst Rwandans within Rwanda in the face of what should be a contestation over the public account of the conflict. These broader issues knit into many this thesis touches upon, including the captivating and stultifying nature of violence, its utility to government, and particularly its association with morality and nationality in Rwanda. An appraisal of the 'emotionally charged' exchanges between myself and officials must therefore also take into account that Rwandans are subject to this kind of persuasive influence, and a reflection on this must extend to include my informants in general, many of whom were not employed as civil servants but who adopted an identical public discourse.

In such complex situations can the ethnographer do more than commit to on-going reflection and remain open to critique of interpretation? In that endeavour I believe that my methodology and the analysis that emerges within this thesis is sufficient in its adoption of that ethic.

Because of the fears and effects of state surveillance, as described above, Rwandan scholarship is thus frequently described as 'politicised'. For historians and political scientists the situation of Rwanda has - perhaps unusually - challenged a disciplinary preference for political neutrality. For anthropologists the notion of politicised research is a little less unusual, even if it is no less controversial (as Bourgois [2007] notes) and debates around the moral purpose and value of anthropological research alongside the issue of a more or less 'engaged' practice is under active debate (see for example discussions in Murison et al. (2013).

Harper and Jimenez (2005) argue that anthropology as a discipline should understand appropriate ethical conduct as an on-going problematic that requires continuous debate and renewal. This is a useful strategy and one adopted by this study as stated in my risk assessment for this research submitted to the University of Edinburgh. Both in the ethnographic field and afterwards, appropriate ethical conduct should be, as Harper and

Jimenez also argue, open to 'a politics of uncertainty' (2005, 11). There is however, as most field researchers (I think) would agree, a vast difference between adopting the idea of a disciplinary 'ethics of uncertainty' and the reality of actually managing this uncertainty day-to-day in the field. In the field, decisions often need to be made about minor issues around ethical conduct at the point of interaction. In addition, the adoption of a broader ethical ethos, say, a concern with the social responsibilities of anthropology (which in many cases is a draw towards 'witnessing' as an act of respect and responsibility in relation to the disempowered, and in which anthropology is characterised as both a field of knowledge and a field of action[4]) reveal themselves to be issues complicated by the murky and complex nature of power and its embedding in that field.

For Susan Thomson (2011a) and others who have produced important and detailed reports from rural and extremely poor Rwandans, often Hutu, who feel that their situation is both worsened and hidden by the state, elevation of voice is essential and it brings with it its own ethical quandaries and long-term responsibilities. A theme emerging from these studies is the extent to which informants resent and resist the impositions of the state, which is characterised as oppressive and undemocratic. These conclusions evoke an ethical imperative to uphold the concerns of informants and thus interlocution with the state becomes problematic both morally and pragmatically.

This research would not have been possible without establishing and maintaining a good relationship with state gatekeepers. The RPF oversee the exhumations in which I participated and key informants – the exhumers who were also genocide Survivors – are an integral part of broad state activities and agendas. Furthermore, as I discuss below, informants'

[4] Employing an often quoted source, Nancy Scheper-Hughes statement on morality and methodology in *Death without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil* (1992)

wellbeing depended on continued close and productive association with the state and - as with many Rwandans - informants were careful to avoid conversation which could be interpreted as criticism of the RPF and its activities.

In reality the exhumers were often caught in an ambiguous relationship with central government. They wanted assistance from the state and were certainly able to access assistance that was unavailable to other Rwandans. Their identities and notions of national belonging were entangled with that of the RPF and with the histories of the genocide that its agendas promoted. But, they were also in many ways at the mercy of a government which imposed on their lives and made demands of them that were uncomfortable. Their livelihood and aspirations for betterment were muted by a broader structurally engrained poverty and social instability that limited their ability to negotiate a more comfortable place for themselves within or aside from that key relationship with the government.

Ethnographic research allows a window onto this ambiguity that, for instance, a survey of opinion, or even a broad scheme of interviews would find it difficult to replicate. Hanging around, (or 'hanging out') reveals the difference between stated intention and actual action, it appreciates day-to-day interactions with other people and things (an interaction critical to this analysis), the mundane gossip that picks up on small or large irritations, moments of boredom, frisson, sadness, joy, amusement and so on. In the case of this research, although political affiliation and imposition is significant it emerges as just one element of a much richer narrative which encompasses the totality of life for the people involved in this study and in which violence – which is political but is also physical, structural and so on – is embedded in informants' lives in ways that challenge the interpretation of that violence as one or the other side of a destructive or productive opposition.

There is a rhetoric, largely humanitarian, relating to 'healing' and 'reconciliation' which constructs the violence and violent conflict that

occurred during the genocide and associated war as an issue that can be closed off and committed to history. Yet the Rwandan genocide Survivors understood and experienced violence in many forms: as an on-going threat and activity, and not as a relatively new event but as a continuation of the struggles they had experienced during the 1990s and earlier. Informants were afraid of actual physical violence from other Rwandans, both

geographically distant (in the border regions of the DRC for instance) and closer to home. I discuss the implications of this for the research later on and in other chapters. Special methodological commentary has been reserved for situations in which violence, in various forms, populates ethnography (see for instance, *Endpieces: The Doing of Anthropology* in Nordstrom and Robben (1995, 254-294)). What frequently emerges from these commentaries is that the practice of ethnography, its basic principles - the negotiation of trust, issues around access, and the propriety of certain forms of information gathering for example - are often issues which are managed using a 'tool kit' of relevance to a particular field, and the form in which violence is present becomes part of that specific negotiation but not necessarily subject to particular methods (often it is the manner in which situated violence is represented ethnographically after the event itself which forms the basis of these commentaries - see introduction to Caplan [2003] for a discussion). In fact, as this thesis argues, if we appreciate violence properly, as an assiduous agent and as slippery in definition then its presence in this context demands far more than just an appreciation of possible physical consequences.

The issue of identity during the conflict was particularly relevant to the situating of this research with informants. Conflict in Rwanda has elevated divisions along ethnic lines, but those ethnic lines of division are not at all clear in their categorisation (even to Rwandans) and also overlap with perceived divisions in identity according, for example, to political affiliation, wealth, country of birth and recent residence. The particular

sensitivities of the research that I undertook and the conduct that would be expected of me if I was to be trusted to a degree by informants could only reveal itself as informants became clearly associated with research and a position in relation to these issues around identity became articulate.

In reflecting on the identity of informants and its effect on my activities in the field I find affinity with Liisa Malkki's statement (and with Feldman's [1991, 10-12] original statement as cited by Malkki [1995]) on her research conducted with Hutu refugees living in Tanzania:

> I would emphasise that in all of this, the success of fieldwork hinged not so much on a determination to ferret out "the facts" as on a willingness to leave some stones unturned, to listen to what my informants deemed important, and to demonstrate my trustworthiness by not prying where I was not wanted. The difficult and politically charged nature of the fieldwork setting made such attempts at delicacy a simple necessity' Like Feldman, I found that "in order to know, I had to become an expert at demonstrating that there were things, places and people I did not want to know. (Malkki 1995, 12)

Malkki's informants had fled violence in Burundi and lived with the fragility of security that comes with refugee status, amongst which was a fear of spying by both the Burundian state and local bureaucratic agents. Both Malkki (1995) and Feldman (1991) worked with informants for whom covert surveillance and the conspicuousness that might accompany association with the researcher was a source of anxiety. Feldman worked amongst members of the Protestant and Catholic working-class communities in Belfast during a time in which many people were involved in clandestine political activity and therefore the need for secrecy was of a slightly different shade to that of Malkki's. Malkki's concern with the fragility of identity and the risks associated with the visibility of certain identities is of relevance to this work. Feldman is very clear in his portrayal of the entanglement that existed between his informants and the on-going presence of actual physical or threatened physical violence, something which is less acute in Malkki's case (although it is still relevant and important). This fieldwork resonates with both aspects of those studies.

Informants for this research were concerned about surveillance by the state but were also worried about the threat of observation and violence at the hands of their neighbours. Identifying as a Tutsi genocide Survivor necessitated the drawing of a clear distinction between themselves and Hutu members of their neighbourhood, just as their public declaration of status and association with the government sometimes set them apart from some groups of Tutsi who could not or did not want to claim such affiliation. Rural neighbours in Rwanda traditionally work very closely together, in Cyanika however the relationship between the genocide Survivors and other members of their community sometimes appeared distant and strained. Both informants and officials spoke about the threat of attack from other local people and in some cases described actual assaults and cases of harassment.

It would have been very awkward for me to have visited other people within my informant communities to whom I had not been formally introduced by those original informants, and there was no opportunity for us to become informally acquainted. The core group of exhumers with whom I most frequently worked did not openly state that they were unhappy with my speaking with specific people, but because I spent every day in close association and in frequent conversation with the exhumers, the sense of who is an acceptable and comfortable conversant and who is not becomes part of a subtle form of understanding: the 'rules' of group association do not necessarily have to be explicitly stated.

Later on, as the in-field research began to draw to a close I was tempted to transgress those boundaries, especially in relation to local Rwandans who had been conscripted by the state to assist with the exhumations at Cyanika. At the site there was open hostility between these reluctant 'volunteers' and the genocide Survivors with whom I worked, but I felt I should at least attempt to open up means of communication. I could not obtain the names or even the location of these other community members without speaking

with district and community leaders as, given the hostility, it would have been inappropriate to ask Hannah, my research assistant at the Cyanika fieldsite, for assistance. I fished around for contact with local leaders who dragged their feet in response to requests and when I was called to say attendance would be permissible the contact was from a district official who informed me that the district mayor would be more than happy to gather together villagers on my behalf and that he would also be in attendance as a translator. Ultimately, I abandoned these attempts at meetings: the imposition on these people, who had already been placed under duress by the state, seemed unfair and unwarranted, especially as informative conversation under the gaze of local authorities was unlikely and there had not been an opportunity to establish the friendly relationship with this group of people that had made communication with the other exhumers so helpful.

Both Malkki and Feldman note that issues around security and fears of surveillance prevented them from overnight residence within the communities in which they worked. Although I spent significant time with informants both during and external to the exhumations, I could not live within the small villages around Cyanika. Amongst the more pervasive rumours that circulated between Rwandan researchers was the idea that conspicuous long-term residence in a rural area would draw unwanted attention from local officials. I don't know if this was a well-founded fear, however, close association with genocide Survivors, particularly by living within a house with them would likely cause difficulties. Neighbours would assume that money was in circulation as a result of that arrangement. Conspicuous wealth in a situation in which most people were extremely poor and often at odds with their neighbours would have been highly problematic.[5] Even though residence was not possible, I tried to set myself apart from very wealthy NGO workers who were seen as very transient visitors to these areas. I frequently arrived on

[5] Ideally, I would have stayed in a separate house in a closer location but the multi-sited nature of my work made this an impractical solution.

foot, with introductions provided by Hannah and with translation assistance from an assistant who travelled from Kigali but who had lived in the area and was known to the neighbourhood.[6] In the evenings I travelled to a nearby town and stayed in a small guesthouse, avoiding the large and expensive hotel on the nearest main road from Cyanika which was popular with tourists and visiting government officials. In Kigali, where informants were scattered across the city, I tried to move away from the gated communities that housed many international residents. I was kindly offered accommodation with the family of a friend in an area of the city popular with recent returnees to Rwanda. Exhumers at Nyanza understood the neighbourhood to be
'respectable' and 'Rwandan'. None of my informants visited me there but it was useful to point at the hillside of houses, which could be seen from many of the exhumers' homes, and therefore place myself as a resident within a familiar community.

Alongside my participant-observation work which included informal conversation, I also conducted formal interviews in which I met with people specifically to ask questions.[7] Quentin, as a Kinyarwanda translator, accompanied me to these meetings in Cyanika and in Kigali. Hannah, one of the exhumers at Cyanika, acted as a guide in locating the homes of informants which were spread across a number of hills within a half day walk of Cyanika. In Kigali, exhumers lived across the city and in villages in the semi-rural areas on its outskirts and were not so difficult to locate as they were often resident on urban streets and interviewees were able to explain their location to a translator who worked with me during these visits. I conducted seventy-five recorded interviews, almost all with exhumers after the exhumations were completed and the remainder with

[6] The translator's father had been a member of the clergy, and Quentin had left the region as a child in the early 1990s - this placed him in a useful position of both familiarity and relative neutrality in relation to his personal history.

[7] Languages used in the field included English, French and Kinyarwanda. French was introduced by the Belgian colonial administration from 1914. English was declared an official language by the RPF in 1994. Most Rwandans use Kinyarwanda as a principal language. Many are also familiar with French, particularly in rural areas. English (sometimes as a principal language) is most often used in and around the capital Kigali.

officials of memory and conservation and with relevant NGO representatives. The interviews range in length from twenty minutes to three hours. I asked very general questions about the exhumations and the subsequent activities and followed these up with more specific questions based on the interviewee's direction of conversation. I explained the purpose of the interview at the time of the recording, although this seemed a little redundant to both my interviewees and I as we had already worked together for some time at the exhumations and in most cases there had been a discussion either between myself and the informant, or between informants themselves about the purpose of my presence.

Many of the genocide Survivors were very familiar with being interviewed. As word spread that I was visiting people systematically informants would call and demand to know why I had not yet been to visit them. Unlike other discussions we held, informants treated these as formal question and answer sessions. Most agreed to be recorded but there was often considerable discomfort with the presence of the recorder. I was asked repeatedly and anxiously if I was going to broadcast the interviewee's voice on the radio. This was mentioned so frequently that it seemed obvious (and in fact one informant confirmed) that some of the genocide Survivors had been warned in an official capacity that recorded conversations might be used inappropriately. I assured informants that nobody would listen to the audio recording except me, and that I would not use their names in the text.[8] It is not possible to give complete anonymity to the informants for this study because we were involved in exhumations and events at definitive times and places. However, I have in basic terms broken the connection between word-for-word quotes and named individuals.

[8] Government officials were so familiar with being interviewed that they were often taken aback if I did not arrive with the recorder. In one case, the official insisted that we reschedule as I had not brought a recorder with me (since we spoke in English it was much easier for me to digest the conversation and write notes without returning to a recording), he then called before my arrival the second time to make sure I hadn't forgotten it. In the case of genocide survivors, the recording device was helpful because the wording of conversations seemed so important, particularly given the repetitive use of significant phrases, and because I was anxious that I remember the content of conversations accurately given the importance of the topic discussed to informants.

Where information would clearly have been problematic for the informant I have not included a specific quote but expressed information as a general opinion or subject of knowledge and removed any reference to a local geographical location. In the case of controversial events I have slightly altered descriptive information so that it would be difficult to definitively identify the individuals involved.

The answers the group provided during recorded interviews were often couched in the standard language of the comfortable public rhetoric on the genocide. Sometimes answers to questions were very short, either as a result of this or because the formal nature of the interview made a longer and more reflective conversation difficult. These formal interviews were often discomforting. In part, because they positioned me not as a friendly associate but as a professional outsider. Our dialogue suddenly shifted from a situation in which I was relatively powerless in the face of interrogation, jesting and acute observation, to one in which I was the interrogator, asking questions with very real weight. There was sometimes a palpable sense of relief on behalf of everyone when we left the interview dialogue (and often the space in which the interview had taken place) and wandered away up the street, or when the recorder was switched off and whichever neighbour had been eavesdropping at the window stepped in for a chat. These were my favourite and often most informative conversations, not the stilted dialogue of the interview and interviewee but the relaxed talk with Marie as she gave me a tour of her cow sheds, or Clara's reflections on the neighbourhood as she walked me back to the bus.

Most informants asked if I wanted their testimony of genocide events. Testimony, is a well-rehearsed narrative of events that genocide Survivors are requested, or volunteer, to provide at memorial events, for visitors to memorials, and in many other situations in which the genocide might be discussed. The script of this narrative often comprised a description of events leading up to and surrounding a particular death or massacre. The account might place the deceased within a community by describing

aspects of their life and personal characteristics, ultimately details are given of the exact nature of their death or disappearance. Accounts are frequently associated with the speaker's personal experiences of violence, and the deaths described those of relatives and neighbours. I did not ask for genocide testimony during the interviews, although it was frequently offered. I told interviewees that they did not need to discuss these events if they did not want to. Prior to fieldwork I had looked carefully at the guidelines for ethical conduct in the field and reasoned that the recollection of personal experiences during genocide would be painful for interviewees. I had some notion of the mental health of informants as potentially affected by their recalling of those memories for my benefit. This turned out to be a naïve interpretation of testimony's purpose and the problematic nature of memory that is not framed by testimony, not to mention an underestimation of the complicated nature of suffering and the recollection or experience of pain.

Zoe Vania Waxman (2008, 2) writes in detail about Holocaust testimony as a very specific form of 'bearing witness' in which witnessing is 'inextricably entwined with the social and historical conditions in which it is done; it is dependent on contemporary conceptions of identity, memory and representation'. Testimony is seen by the narrator as a form of duty both to the dead and of contribution to the organisation of the living in the management of the identities to which Waxman refers. In Rwanda, the provision of narrative testimony deserves similar close treatment, for Survivors too there is a feeling that the retention of memory depends on their words and in which the stability of their identity as genocide victim is dependent upon the successful communication of this formal narrative evidence of their experiences.

Vania Waxman (2008, 158) argues that for the Holocaust Survivors 'the writing of testimony is often a way to organize the experiences of life in order to make sense of them and function in the present'. Her words speak to the inherently difficult and complex nature of describing past violent

events in the present. Many informants would ask if I would like their testimony and chose not to provide it when I told them that it was in their hands to do so or not. However, in the absence of formal testimony the need to give organised information was still felt keenly. I would be asked anxiously by the interviewee if their words were 'ok'. Did they say they right thing? Did they answer the questions correctly?

Whether or not testimony was provided, the setting of the interview in which those conversations were implied, and in which we talked about the exhumations and the human remains that we had found, there was a raw element to recollection. This was often marked by fragmentary narrative, or by silence, or interviewees were simply very distressed, cried throughout my visit and there were very few words within our conversation. One such example took place during a trip to visit informants who lived in the villages on the outskirts of the exhumation site:

I am sat in the back yard of the house of an informant, an older woman. We are resting on a reed mat with our backs against the wall, our legs stretched out in front of us in the sun. She wants to let me into the house she says, as is the respectable fashion for treating guests but she has rented the house out to another family and is sleeping in a small shed at the back of the property. We contemplate the fence in front of us that surrounds her garden. I compliment her on the carefully tended border in front of the fence in which flowers have been planted. The conversation turns to the past, Sarah talks about how much more beautiful the garden was in the house she had before the genocide, when her husband and children were alive. All of a sudden as often happens in these kinds of conversation, she begins talking about the technological college at Murambi on the other side of the hills, an infamous massacre site. She hid in those buildings for many days, she said, with her children and other relatives - "one day, a helicopter came over the hill in the dark, it was a French helicopter and we thought it was coming to rescue us but then it just went away and the soldiers

came"… she scowls, resting her elbows on her knees, her fingers wrap over her mouth: "I cannot speak any more. I will be angry" (edited from field notes March 2012).

Conversation with informants during this research about the nature of past conflict, and about the present situation of the exhumations was fragmented for a number of reasons: the conflict confused notions of time and the location of events, and the form and content of Survivor's stories were mediated by local notions of what constitutes a 'good' narrative and by the entanglement between testimony and broader political purpose. However, when the woman above places her hand over her mouth and refuses to go on, or when informants simply sigh and cover their faces, or cry, there is more to this expression than the political or cultural mediation of narrative.

For Vania Waxman (2008), verbal expression is an inadequate transformation of the incomprehensibility of personal suffering – in the very attempt to move experience into words, the 'unimaginable' distress that the sufferer wishes to convey is muted in the transformation into a familiar medium. What the narrator turns to therefore is silence, or an exclamation that it is impossible to put the issue into words.

Although she does not reference the author in her text, Vania Waxman's argument bears strong similarities to Scarry's (1985) writing on pain and the apparently unresolvable gap between the internal experience of pain and its external expression. Scarry argues similarly, that pain is difficult to express because it has no referential content and therefore verbal objectification cannot successfully convey the experience of the pain to a second person, the attempt merely providing an inadequate and fleeting idea of its presence. Problematically, Scarry (1985, 11) draws a distinction between what she calls psychological pain and physical pain, arguing that psychological pain does have referential content and is susceptible to verbal objectification in a way that physical pain is not. I find it difficult to understand the pain felt by those individuals who struggled to express their feelings as a different and more distant kind of sensation. To me, these

exclamations of grief are about an immediacy of sensation and suffering marked by the same 'shattering of language' Scarry speaks about (particularly, 1985, 5).

Das (1995, 175), on the other hand argues that even in the absence of words, pain can still be communicated to an Other, and that pain marks 'the beginning of a language game rather than its end'. Das's interest is in whether pain creates personhood within which the person who experiences pain is 'always a debtor in relation to the community laying claim on the person', or if shared pain is a way of communicating the distress of political excesses – the creation of a moral community of sufferers and a way of resisting or communicating that which is otherwise concealed.

The suffering of Survivors, and the idea of the suffering survivor were clearly used in Rwanda to further a political cause. However, informants, although publically supportive of that cause, were often ambivalent in their conversations in a way which rejected a passive acceptance of that imposition upon memory, exactly the issue that Das reveals in her work. The interviews and our associated conversations were useful in that respect, recording the particular character of expression used in relating past to present and picking-up on inconsistencies and fragmentation of description. For example, my informants rarely spoke about their life prior to the genocide. Some were very young children when the genocide took place, for others, reminders of children and partners who had died during the genocide was sometimes too distressing. Although not specifically communicated as such, it was as if the past didn't exist, or as if it was deliberately denied but that little bits and pieces escaped anyhow from that denial, almost accidentally. There was a sense in which a pre- genocide life seemed very distant, and very difficult to reconcile with the present day. Conversations about the past often circled back to possessions and houses that had been destroyed or stolen (as with the conversation about flowerbeds, above). People would speak about how different the landscape was now to then but struggle to articulate how exactly it was different. In

these moments what is communicated is that reality has or is supposed to have shifted (in keeping also with a national understanding of a kind of 'reborn' Rwanda) but that this shift is unclear in its character and the overall impression was that the Survivors were not wholly convinced by that distinction.

Where Das's account is very useful, particularly in examining the methodology for this research, is her reference to the idea that the inscription of pain upon the body is a part of the process of forming moral community, or of inscribing a personhood in which the individual finds themselves indebted (usually) to the state. Scarry is also preoccupied with the body and talks of the way in which it is possible for the 'felt- attributes of pain to be lifted into the visible world but (now) attached to a referent.' This reference can be both the human or non-human body (Scarry 1985, 13).

Certainly in the case of Rwanda the human body has become an incredibly important referent for pain inflicted during the genocide. Take for example the replaying of graphic scenes of bodily violation over and over again during the genocide memorial events on both television and on the radio. Informants with access to those media outlets routinely viewed these programmes. For example, when I arrived at one particular informants house during the memorial week he had sat his young son in front of the television screen in order to witness a frequently televised report in which two Rwandan women are stopped in the road and hacked to death with machetes.

The human remains visible in the memorial sites and frequently handled by the exhumers speak to many of these issues. Participant-observation work at exhumations approached this issue and more. On some levels it overcame the silence - the fragmented conversation and the uncomfortable formality of narrative associated with duty, to the state and the dead. But it was also a way of coming to understand the manner in which distress can

or cannot be communicated through materials, in this case, human remains. Where and what is the nature of pain or distress in this enterprise and what is it doing?

Ethnographic Work with Human Remains

The content and purpose of the work of exhuming and rearticulating human remains at both Nyanza and at the Cyanika exhumation sites became the unique focus of this thesis, emerging from the intention to investigate the entanglement between human remains and memories of violence in Rwanda. A large proportion of the data which is fed into this thesis is drawn from participant-observation, in which I took part in exhumations and the activities that took place afterwards. Participation-observation provided assistance in a situation in which open conversation was obscured, not only by forceful consensus on appropriate public conversation but by the fragility of relationships and uncertainty of security that is linked to recent and on-going interpersonal violence, and because certain elements of information, particularly in relation to the dead and their bodies, are not verbal or necessarily visual.

Day to day activities and conversation at the exhumations and the activities afterwards provided invaluable information that had not emerged via formal interviews. In particular, it opened up a more detailed and nuanced understanding of the relationship between the exhumers and the state, as well as with other Rwandans. Working alongside people through the process of exhuming and transforming the remains allowed me to see an unfolding group dynamic and the consolidation of the associated identity of both the living and the dead. Finally, and critically, entanglement with the materials of exhumation was itself informative. Perhaps in this activity more than any other, the data and the method itself are closely entwined.

Nordstrom and Robben (1995, 4) argue that ‘the lived experience of violence - and the epistemology of violence - the ways of knowing and

reflecting about violence - are not separate'. 'Experience and interpretation are inseparable …'. Working alongside the exhumers and being viscerally involved with the stuff taken out of the graves is association with violence of a sort. What emerged from the mass graves and was shaped in the hands of the exhumers were violated and violating remains of the conflict. It caused the people working at the sites real physical harm to their wellbeing (as discussed by informants themselves). In work at these exhumations and in handling human remains 'the lived experience of violence' and 'the ways of knowing and reflecting on violence' become knotted together for informants and researcher alike.

Working with Exhumers

The exhumation of remains after their initial burial is not a part of commonplace contemporary or historical funerary and mortuary processes in Rwanda. These exhumations were also quite distinct from normal archaeological or forensic practice. Although the work of exhumation involved elements of these other practices it was on the whole an innovative activity, constituted by elements of the above two practices but ultimately familiar to neither. The Survivor-exhumers were frequently personally associated with the dead buried within the graves but their commitment was not only driven by a wish to resolve the undignified burial of friends and relatives, the exhumations and the bodies that emerged from them were also critical elements in the creation and maintenance of a post-genocide identities that encompassed both personal identities (of the exhumers and the exhumed) and the identity of the Rwandan nation as envisioned by the state who oversaw the work. The exhumations, and the things exhumed, were to be the 'proof' of the violence of genocide, artefacts with which to populate the memorialization of the genocide and support the coherence and stability of the identity of the post-genocide nation.

In Chapter Five I discuss the exhumation of human remains as a means through which community is secured. In this case kinship is, in part,

affirmed through the shared work of exhuming and affirming the presence of human remains. As a participant in this process the exhumers placed me in a role that they were comfortable with, explaining (often to me, as well as to other people) that my work at the exhumation sites was as a result of my 'love' for the exhumers and for 'their people' buried in the graves. This explanation was repeated despite my reminders that I was conducting research for a book. In their minds I was a benevolent presence, a witness with sympathetic motives as so many NGO workers presented themselves.

The understanding that I cared about the group and about the dead people to whom these activities were dedicated (which I did) was an important element of my comfortable association with the exhumations. To be permitted to handle the human remains was a privilege, and one which was denied to other people, as the group told me proudly one day when I arrived at the site a little later than usual to be informed that earlier that morning they had told another *muzungu*[9] – who had arrived with a camera and official permission to use it – that they must leave.

I had been concerned prior to fieldwork that I might impose on these people during a very private process. However, it was ultimately my discomfort with some elements of the welcoming of my involvement which was problematic. For example, as the exhumations at Cyanika came to a close I suffered a period of ill health in which intense nausea and headaches could only be lessened by lying motionless in a dark room. The exhumers called occasionally to offer both consolation and congratulations. 'Now you are one of us!' Muchecuru declared when I was well enough to pay her a visit. In Rwanda, 'genocide trauma' has emerged as a complex set of symptoms expressed by those victimised during the genocide. It carries a moral tone – only Tutsi are afflicted by 'genocide trauma' as public narrative dictates that only Tutsi suffered during the genocide. In reality, the condition, which includes ill health varying from hysteria to catatonic depression, has emerged through the intersection of a

[9] The word is used for Europeans/white persons. It literally means 'to be rich' in Kinyarwanda

culturally-bound illness known as 'ghost sickness' which existed long before the conflict of the 1990s, and the impositions of western notions of PTSD which have found great traction in Rwanda via the hands of NGO practitioners and mental health practice in post-genocide Rwanda.[10]

At the time I was deeply uncomfortable both with the implication that my poor health was linked causally to contact with human remains (an implication that would have very weighty significance to those working with a biomedical framing of trauma) and by the idea that I was somehow initiated into a group of sufferers via that understanding. However, although the implication that the experience of handling human remains in the present is in some way synonymous with the experience of witnessing violence in the past is an interesting element of this analysis, Muchecuru's congratulations on my 'trauma' were intended to be a kind acknowledgement of my commitment to the group rather than a deep conviction that my identity had somehow shifted. At many points in the research it was obvious that I was understood to represent a collective body of outsiders, a way in which an important process, an important subject, was to be communicated to the wider world. After all of the worry that I would not be able to establish sufficient proximity to the issue at hand, this distancing ironically offered a reassurance at the points at which my entanglement with the exhumations and human remains began to feel overwhelming. Certainly, the group were self-conscious about their activities and were sometimes anxious that actions be defended lest I interpret them 'badly'. When conversation at the gravesides became ethnically offensive for example, it was often the case that one or another member of the group would take pains to explain the conversations of their co-workers away (usually by stating that their emotions, their anger at the sight of the bodies, had led them to behave in this way) or, in Ada's case, to loudly proclaim their disagreement with the offending person's

[10] For a discussion on this see Guglielmo (2015). Das (1995) also speaks about the entanglement between expressions of ill health and moral worlds (p.176-177) citing the influential article by Kleinman and Kleinman (1991).

perspective.

At other times the insistence that I had a duty to witness certain elements of the process became very difficult. For example, when I arrived at the memorial service in Cyanika the group, as genocide Survivors, had duties inside the memorial itself. Julia pressed into my hands the traditional white material that female members of the deceased wore at funerals, insisting that I too must wear the dress and stand with the group inside the memorial in front of the alcoves of bones to greet the arriving mourners. I was a little disturbed. I had taken part in the work but I had not lost relatives, nor was I a genocide Survivor. I told Julia that I could not wear the material, particularly as the event was being filmed for a documentary, and, avoiding the real reason for my reticence, not entirely untruthfully I claimed I was feeling unwell and that I could not stand inside the building with the other Survivors. Julia was very angry. She grabbed my arm and made to drag me towards the memorial. "But you are one of the team!" she shouted, "now you must finish with us!" Eventually, we reached a compromise, I would stand with the group during the interment but I would not wear the clothing. In a strange inverse of the position of archaeologists Kirk and Start (1999), who speak about putting on protective clothing (masks and gloves and plastic suits) to allow some emotional distance from the bodies that they are dissecting, I could not agree to put on a piece of clothing which, even if symbolically, brought my person much closer to that of the dead and their relatives.[11]

The Presence of Human Remains

As I will discuss in Chapter Five, human remains that are stored within the memorial sites do not emerge easily during exhumation. The exhumations *create* bodies because what is taken out of the pits is not immediately articulate human remains but lumps of incoherent stuff that the exhumers sometimes firmly label part of a body (or not), sometimes only tentatively

[11] The exhumers' control over access to the site was not superior to that of the government officials who occasionally brought group of visiting international visitors, usually missionary groups, to the exhumations and the storage areas where the bones were located.

conceive as part of a body (or not), and sometimes, despite considerable work, the exhumed materials remain indeterminate or the body remains 'invisible' - presumed to still be in amongst the grave matter somewhere but apparently impossible to recover.

In following chapters I argue that the emergence of the exhumed body is both the product and producer of an assemblage of both human and nonhuman things, echoing the way in which Bennett (2005) employs Deleuze's notion of the assemblage as an appreciation of the complexity of elements which overlap and interact in and around the emergence of these human remains. A simple comprehension of this interactive web includes, for example, the unfolding community of the exhumers, post-genocide notions of personal and national identity, RPF intervention in the exhumation and transformation process, exhumers' knowledge of forensic technique and funerary tradition, and emic concepts of the coherent body.

Lending Bennett's notion of the assemblage its full credence entails interpreting the world as a continuous flow of materiality in which forces and actants sometimes solidify into entities and things and sometimes do not. Most important in this work is the lack of discrimination between the agency of human and nonhuman things. The properties of the soil that comprise the graves, the atmospheric conditions at their opening. In fact the material affordances or constraints of the entire mass of stuff that is heaved out of the graves in hoes and hands are 'symmetrical' elements of this assemblage. Their agency is tempered by interaction with other actants, entities and forces and not by an a priori understanding of nonhuman things as subservient to human culture. Within this 'enchanted materialism' argues Bennett we can also be understood as a human-nonhuman assemblage, and in this sense both the exhumers and the exhumed as entangled in an interdependent process of meaning-making (Bennett 2003).

The utility of being an insider/outsider to the exhumation group was that it allowed me to see where the boundaries of that group were clearly defined (or not), and to understand the relationships between people at the

exhumations as a process in formation, not yet clearly defined but with quite specific purpose. Taking part in the exhumations, working with exhumers as they opened up the pits, sitting and standing next to exhumers as we sifted through the stuff taken out of the graves, and engaging in conversations about the things that emerged from that substrate, was invaluable. It allowed me to both see and feel the significance of this process and to understand its entanglement with emotion, and with the felt 'presence' of the human remains and other materials.

Taking part in exhumation work, and working alongside others as they try to make human remains slide into view, reveals the inherent awkwardness of that process. It reveals the visible/invisible nature of the remains, the problems that various aspects of the body present – a false leg, detached flesh of muscles and skin, a bone that does not look like the others – are suddenly revealed. Actually handling the remains is therefore important both methodologically and intrinsically (as Sofaer [2012] discusses). Work in this way revealed important insight into the effect (and affect) of human remains upon the handler. The salient point, as Crandall and Martin (2014) point out, is that as objects human remains have the ability to shift emotion. The physical 'intercorporeality' which Sofaer (2012) mentions as an equal pressure of touch between living and dead body, is also caught in a corporeal process of becoming and an intangible sense of emotive presence, in which it seems the bones 'press' on the witness or handler almost more than the handler presses upon them. The sense of filtering out flesh and bone from the soil can be contrasted with the feelings associated with emotive sense of being left alone in a hall full of thousands of bones after they have been cleaned, disarticulated and piled up on tarpaulin in preparation for placement in coffins and memorial shelves. I develop a discussion of this entanglement in Chapter Five.

The 'team' that Anna described above referred to the exhumations as 'our work' and would frequently impress upon me the exclusive nature of its membership, both in terms of who was able to participate and in terms of

the successful production of bodies. The Survivor-exhumers intended this exclusion to include Hutu, who were almost exclusively synonymous with the notion of a perpetrator of genocide violence according to the Survivors, and therefore their handling of the remains would have been inappropriate.[12] However, the group also extended this exclusion to other Rwandans, either those who had not personally suffered during the genocide, or genocide Survivors who could not control their emotions in the presence of the bones and exhumations and either determinedly avoided attending the exhumation process or were incapacitated by tears or the screaming hysterics of 'trauma' when they did attend (the expression of trauma was only expected and acceptable after the exhumations). All of this latter group were swept under the same umbrella – as emotionally unable to handle the sight of the bodies.

When I asked why this group in particular were able to manage the remains, Muchecuru told me that the 'we are strong like trees', implying that the Survivors who worked at the exhumations were special because they did not succumb to emotion in the way that other people did. The group spoke about suffering trauma, not during the exhumations but in its aftermath, at the public memorial services when trauma manifest as hysteria would commonly be presented. At the interment service in Cyanika some of the group were so hysterical that they were hospitalized, stretched out on mattresses at the local clinic, extra mattresses having been procured solely for the interment and memorial service.

In as much as Survivors claimed they were unaffected by remains, this was patently not true, as later conversations about nightmares and visions, and the anxiety around the work in general, revealed. Denial, in some ways relates to the unquantifiable nature of that discomfort. In Rwandan cosmology spirits are a very active presence amongst the living, but the hangover from these exhumations was not about spirits, or at least,

[12] Hence, as discussed above, the great offence that was caused by the state's conscription of 'other' members of community to take part in the work.

certainly never openly expressed in that way by the exhumers. Instead the sense of something unsettling was about something else less quantifiable, less comprehensible, and therefore in some ways more difficult to manage. There were small giveaways in which people demonstrated or voiced discomfort, but also in the way in which despite handling the human remains with bare hands and walking about the exhumation site in sandals covered in grave dust when I returned home, I would leave all of my clothes and other possessions that had been to the site in a pile outside the back door, even if I had washed them.

Ultimately, as I illustrate in Chapter Five, Six and Seven this sense of an 'excess' matters because it explains why the work of substantiating the buried remains of the dead cannot be free of uncertainty nor are the exhumed human remains ever completely coherent and settled - as memorial things or as the dignified dead. This uncertainty, an unsettling 'presence' (Runia 2006) permeates the memorials as others have noted (Guyer 2009) and sometimes attempted to resolve (theologically for instance, Aguilar [2009]).

There is a need to acknowledge the risk of confusing a personal reaction to the presence of human remains, with the reactions of the Rwandan exhumers, and of carrying over that entanglement into an analysis. In the present day social sciences, particularly archaeological and forensic sciences frameworks, with which my disciplinary and personal background is most clearly associated, human remains are viewed as dangerous.[13] It is assumed that contact with human remains carries the risk of damage to both physical and mental health.[14] I refer back to Robben (2007), discussed in the initial section of this chapter, writing on the issue of 'ethnographic seduction' and his argument that researchers should be aware

[13] At the request of the risk assessment reviewer at the University of Edinburgh, I contacted the forensic anthropology lab at Dundee University who told me that the mass grave remains were unlikely to be a source of pathogens, unless the buried persons had died of Small-Pox.
[14] See detailed discussions in Downes and Pollard (1999), also Moshenska (2006), who argues that fear of emotional damage is largely rooted in an understanding of human remains as 'uncanny', that they are inherently things made visible that should not be visible.

of the powerful draw and effect of narrative about violence and suffering upon the researcher. In a similar vein handling human remains which are entangled with violence (both as fragmented bodies, and in association with particular histories) requires some careful reflection on the manner in which this effects the narrative that is produced and its interpretation by readers. In some senses, this has been evident in the early presentation of ideas contained within this thesis, in conversation both formal and informal, in which the idea of the ethnographer handling human remains becomes the issue that listeners are drawn towards, rather than the focus remaining on the exhumations and their purpose. In some ways the attention is understandable, given the emotive nature of the remains and because handling human remains is seen as the exclusive domain of a small number of professionals and carries deeply ingrained assumptions about risk to the handler and the handler's body. (For the UK, where this research is most often presented, see Downes and Pollard (1999), who have published a useful series of writings on archaeologists association with 'fleshy' human remains and the discomfort often associated with this).

Scarry (1985) discusses the problem of describing violated bodies and argues that avoiding a full description of human remains contributes to the silencing effect of violation, which often proves useful in perpetuating distant war because it hides the true nature of it. However, in this case there is a need to tread carefully, because human remains have the capacity to mesmerize. Merely describing the appearance of them (or including photographs) without context, might cast a spell over readers with no purpose other than to draw a captive audience - indeed, this is part of the state's purpose in placing these within memorials. In putting these objects into context however, and in describing their emergence from soil substrate, in embedding their eventual emergence in a broader narrative about mourning, politics and identity, and in turning the view around so that the audience views an argument about why this quality of presence is there and what it does, these descriptions serve an important purpose.

Mass grave, Lake Victoria, Uganda, authors own photograph, February 2011

Mass grave, Rusumu, Tanzania, author's own photograph, February 2011

Chapter Four: Survivors

Introduction

> Opposite the entrance to Nyanza, on the other side of a the busy tarmac road, a steep track ran downhill and into a mass of semi-rural housing. Kigali has expanded east into this area that ten or fifteen years ago had been bush and scattered villages. The cheap land has become popular with Rwanda's new wealthy. Scrubby concrete and mud houses are squeezed in between more recent builds surrounded by high, expensive fencing with wide entrance gates for vehicles. Clara's house was a thirty minute walk though the sprawl. The housing is gradually less grandiose and more often interspaced with maize and banana plots as the gravelled track crumbled away and became a rough mud thoroughfare.
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> Clara's home consists of a few almost bare concrete rooms. Visitors perch on a wooden bench in the main room. A stove and a few concrete sacks sit in a side room. A mattress is pushed into the corner of a third room. The only decoration, the ubiquitous poster of Kagame, spectacled and studious, looks down on us from a wall above the bench. When I arrive Clara is flustered and sends her daughter to rummage around in one of the side rooms. I have asked to record an interview and she is worried that I will want to see her "certificate": a document that has been given to her as proof that she is a genocide survivor.
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> **EDITED FROM FIELDNOTES, MAY 2012**

Not all Rwandans can publically call themselves a 'genocide survivor' even if they had been present in Rwanda during the event and had suffered violence directed against them. The label cannot be claimed by any Rwandan other than those who successfully argue that they hold a Tutsi lineage. The term also excludes Rwandans persecuted for reasons

other than the intended annihilation of the Tutsi, during the violent unrest in and around 1994. This included, for example, political affiliation, land and property struggles, and other personal disputes that arose in the wake of economic destitution and a palpable fear of instability.[1] There were many thousands of Rwandans killed by RPF soldiers and associates during the RPF invasion of Rwanda in the 1990s. These people are also unable to claim the status of 'survivor', or of victim in many cases. There are also Tutsi who were the subject of ethnically motivated violence but who cannot or do not publically claim association with these identities, either because the validity of their claim has been disputed or because they are unwilling to set their experiences within the politically framed narrative of the Tutsi victim and become associated with national memorial practice. 'Genocide Survivors' are therefore a very select group, a small subset of the vast number of Rwandans who lived through violence during the very difficult years in which the genocide took place.

Genocide Survivors are framed within the literature of advocacy organisations as if they emerged spontaneously from the rubble of conflict. In reality, after the RPF declared victory in Rwanda and the massacres targeting Tutsi had ended, it was months and years before the identity became a clearly defined category which Rwandans could or could not align themselves to.

The identity has emerged and become crystallized within national and international discourses as the histories of genocide have settled into a familiar collective public narrative. The people who emerged from the rubble, who were believed to be Tutsi, and who had experienced violent persecution by the *génocidaires* marked the beginning of the survivor community. The community and its members then gathered defining characteristics as it rolled through the aftermath of the intense phase of the conflict and the transition in governance. Ultimately, to be publically

[1] The report overseen by Des Forges (1999) remains the most comprehensive account of the conflict. This report argues that although violence was directed predominantly at Tutsi, perpetrators took part in the violence for a range of reasons.

known as a genocide survivor has become a marker of political affinity; a form of moral personhood; and as I will touch upon here, a complex mode of kinship.

The idea of the identity, rather like the concept of the genocide itself, carries great power and influence both within and outside of Rwanda. This chapter looks beneath the abstracted characteristics of the identity and focuses on the messy ambiguities of the status, examining what it means to adopt the label and live with and through it in the everyday, which is a different and more complex issue. To be a Rwandan genocide survivor is to perform a certain role, to manage certain obligations with regards to conduct, it is to be associated with the RPF's nation building ideology in a particular way. Because of these associations, the vector through which I will discuss the identity is the notion of 'citizenship' as it relates to post-genocide Rwandan state discourse which proclaims the aim of establishing a collective national identity of 'Rwandness' free from the vagaries of ethnicity. This is tied into an imagining of a future in which prosperity, at least for some, is believed to be realised in adhering to ideals of national development.

As genocide Survivors, research informants were able to align with this notion of citizenship in a way that many Rwandans (in a striking discord with proposed collective unity) are unable or unwilling to do. The irony for genocide Survivors is that in the very ability to tap into the state's accepted category of citizenship the group immediately locate themselves at the uncomfortable margins of both that category and of life within their residential communities. What this incongruity reveals is the deep complications and contradictions inherent in the way national public discourse defines a unified national identity and citizenry and the way in which those identities are actually embedded, often through government activities, in life at the local level in Rwanda.

Using this lens is not intended to narrowly define these research informants, as if being 'a genocide survivor' or a genocide survivor-citizen

was their only significant identity. I have accepted informants' insistence that attachment to this identity is fundamental to the character of their life and livelihoods. At the same time I allow nuance, drawn from observation and broader discussion, to contextualise the realities of the day to day embedding of this identity within their lives. Ultimately the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 2006) of genocide Survivors to which these informants ascribed was as much about the need for solidarity and a sense of belonging as it was about the need to access the resources and benefits offered by the government.

It is a concern with belonging that guides the second half of this chapter, in which I reflect on the clash between the RPF's claims to adhere to a liberal democratic politic and the activities which appear to contradict those aims. This treads old paths for Rwandan scholarship, which has frequently argued that the RPF's claim to ethnic impartiality is deeply fraught given that the majority of its leadership has been, and continues to be, dominated by Tutsi drawn from the diaspora.[2] However, my discussion will add something more to this point, building on the RPF's characterisation of itself as a 'family' or 'lineage', '*umuryango'* in Kinyarwanda. The people with whom I worked were provided with a cow each shortly after the exhumation work had finished, the cows were sourced by the IMBUTO Foundation, a national fund for 'widows, orphans of genocide and impoverished families', which is headed by the First Lady, Jeanette Kagame.[3] The arrival of these cows was revealing of the relationship between the Survivors and the RPF elite. I tentatively argue that the identity in formation for these people is not just one of citizenship, but of a new association with a category of lineage identity that is in reformation, as born out of the present political and social conditions. This association is needed by the RPF, just as much as an association with the elite and a continual reinforcement of belonging to a community of genocide victims is needed by the genocide Survivors.

[2] See discussions in Chapter Two, and also Zorbas (2004); Chemouni (2014); Ansoms (2009) who comment specifically on this issue.
[3] http://www.imbutofoundation.org/who-we-are/founder-foundation/article/our-founder-president

Coming together for work at the exhumation sites provided an opportunity for people to voice their feelings about the differences between the collective communities of 'us', the Survivors, a group they also referred to as '*umuryango wanjye*' 'my people', and that of other people in Rwanda. The situation of the exhumations also allowed the group to exercise considerable power and coercive influence over government officials, generating moments, however fleeting, of a redress in the imbalance between the bureaucratic imaginary of the survivor as state subject and the reality of the personal lives of these people. In illustrating this point I will draw upon one particular event which involved accusations made by the exhumer-Survivors that sheets originally used to wrap the corpses had been stolen from the exhumed materials lying next to the open mass graves. The accusations were directed at both the Hutu workers who were employed as manual labourers at the sites and at the government officials who were felt to be ineffective in reacting to their theft. In the 'riot' which followed the Survivors utilised the full spectrum of their influence including the distressing and disruptive expression of 'trauma', and their relative protection from accountability. In doing so, the Survivors successfully subverted not just the normal hierarchy of authority at the site but subtly transgressed other norms framing the broader form of governance.

Citizenship/Survivors

In contrast to organised testimonial, first-hand, unmediated accounts give the impression of great chaos and confusion during the intense periods of conflict in the mid-nineties. During the genocide massacres of 1994 and as the RPF moved through the country from the border with Uganda to Kigali in the South up to a million Rwandans moved out of the country, the majority into the Kagera region of Tanzania and the Ituri region of Eastern Congo. Inside Rwanda several million people were internally displaced. Some fled periodically from one location to the next over a number of months in an attempt to find safe residence. This period of movement was both entangled with and spurred on by continued spates of violence perpetrated by remaining *interahamwe*, by RPF soldiers, by other

Rwandans desperate to pin down resources for themselves, and by a vast influx of Tutsi returnees from long term exile, who followed in the footsteps of the RPF soldiers and were similarly keen to locate or recover land and property. First-hand accounts of life during this period give the impression of sustained uncertainty, of having to frequently move to and through areas unknown and associate with unfamiliar people in an attempt to get by. All of this alongside the constant fear that violence could interrupt or erupt at any moment.

During the organised and sudden attacks by the *interahamwe* in 1994, research informants told me that they had often left familiar places without knowing where they were going. Julia's account of escape from Cyanika for instance was fragmented, and in some places it was nonsensical and repetitive. The narrative was interspaced with a few clear recollections but these are set within a story which has no logical flow. For instance, Julia recalled specific elements of events: hiding in the eaves of the hospital buildings in Cyanika, fleeing from the buildings when they were set on fire … and then the story is confusing … there are distances traversed, there are groups of people with whom she stayed for indeterminate periods of time. At some point she returned to Cyanika and as she was a child and her own parents were dead she lived between the community residents, sometimes with the 'genocide widows' who lived in the small row of houses that had been built for them on the edge of Nyamagabe town: "we brought her up ourselves" said Marie, who by 'we' indicated the group of female genocide Survivors who lived in the general vicinity, although her recollection of when and how Julia had arrived was vague. Sometimes Julia's memories were embellished with specific scenes. For example, one day we walked through the fields to visit a friend. We climbed a fence and took a shortcut through a field of maize. The scratchy leaves of the maize plants closed in around us and crackled as they were pushed out of the way. We could hardly see what was ahead of us. All through the field Julia laughed to herself "this is like running away during genocide" she said, as we rustled through the vegetation.

Some informants had managed to hide away with relatives, or had successful crossed over the border into Congo or Burundi, or moved into RPF held territory. Many of the women who worked at the exhumation sites had not 'escaped' as such, but had been savagely attacked and left alive. Some were very vague about their whereabouts during that time, perhaps because they were not sure what had happened to them, or simply did not want to discuss it. This is an honest reflection of the way that many people remember (or don't remember) that period of time, several years in fact, in which the country remained in turmoil after the RPF seized power at the end of the months of genocide in 1994.

In addition to the dispersal of people into strange places, large numbers of properties were destroyed by armed forces and local militia, buildings that were not destroyed were quickly reoccupied either by those who had ousted the original occupants or by others who had not yet fled or only just arrived into the country. Philippe had travelled into Rwanda just behind the RPF's invading soldiers in 1994 and found many of the houses in the city empty. There are two doors to every Rwandan house, Philippe reminded me, and at the time it was as though his family had arrived just as the previous occupants had left out of the back door. In the years after 1994 many of these properties were returned to their owners either via the *Gacaca* Courts or were handed over to their new occupants by official or informal local agreements. Philippe eventually had to leave after the owner of his property returned, but he had by that time found funding to buy a plot of land and build his current house. After the conflict had died down many did not return to their previous places of residence, either because they feared the consequences of returning to communities in which violence had occurred, or because they were afraid to face familiar places given the memories of violence that had taken place there.

This confusion of time and locations has never mended or 'healed' (to evoke the language of post-conflict reconciliation), it continues into the post-conflict years and is echoed in the way in which relationships and the

landscape itself was often indicated to be unfamiliar. Evoking a broad notion of change, many Rwandans will argue that they cannot communicate with each other, that they do not 'know' their neighbours. Marie would sit outside of the memorial buildings and at some point during almost every conversation would sweep her hand across the scene of the hills in front of us and say emphatically that this was all so different now to the scene before the genocide. "You cannot know how different it is" she would insist if I asked for details. It is problematic to characterise the genocide as a kind of dystopian catastrophe without appropriately contextualising the way in which that narrative has been used for particular ends (see Chapter Two), but it is also important to understand the extent to which the organised massacres and the associated conflict did suddenly alter not just the literal landscape but the way in which people in Rwanda relate to land, property and kin. It is on that uncertain ground that this category of identity, 'genocide survivor', became salient for people.

How exactly present day survivor identity emerged in Rwanda is very difficult to grasp, partly because the history of its emergence is difficult to map. But, Zoe Vania Waxman's (2008) description of the settling of 'survivor' identity and the framework within which the identity is defined in the years following the end of Second World War is a useful comparator. The Holocaust concentration camps were not widely known about within Allied Europe until a while after the War and the term Holocaust Survivor, did not emerge into common usage until around twenty years after this. Its existence emerged as synonymous with the routine production of testimony from survivors of the Holocaust. Prior to the opening up of conversation that was sparked by Nuremberg Trials there had been a relative vacuum of conversation, aside from conversations that took place within the relatively private confines of the Yiddish language, about the targeted massacre of Jewish peoples during the War. Once it became a matter of public conversation the identity was readily adopted or associated with many people both as a vehicle through which individual testimony could be channelled and allowed greater

exposure, and as a means of articulating the collective nature of suffering – the suffering of a collective Jewish populace. Many of those who had escaped or lived to see the end of the camps felt burdened by a need to articulate an intense on-going sense of distress, or to atone for their own avoidance of death. Many found salve in the delivering of these narratives, both as a means of countering the sense that what had happened was so unbelievable in its inhumanity that it could not have been a real event, and in the deeply moral messages that were drawn out of the stories and given a universalistic application so that their presentation was interpreted as a duty to of those who had experienced the events first-hand.

In the Rwandan case, broad public acceptance of the event as a genocide, and the subsequent notion of the Tutsi Genocide survivor also took time to emerge, although much more quickly than that of the Holocaust.[4]

Part of the trauma of the Holocaust for survivors of the concentration camps and the families of the dead was that the bodies of the dead often no longer existed as a reference point in attempts to fight what seemed a violence so inhumane that it could not be real. In Rwanda, alongside the intense anger that the country had been left alone with its problems, and the fear that this might happen again, there was quite the opposite situation. There were so very many violated bodies and these were, quite literally, everywhere. Although the Survivors' accounts of time during and almost immediately after the end of the massacres was confusing, a consistent theme was activities which involved locating, recovering, burying, reburying and 'washing' bodies. This happened as early as 1995 in Murambi according to interviewees around Cyanika. The same process happened as the battle between the RPA and MRND forces still raged in Kigali in mid-1994 according to interviewees around Nyanza.[5] The recovery of the dead and their handling became one of the first activities

[4] In part this was because the realisation of the Holocaust initiated the legal framework through which the events in Rwanda were more rapidly interpreted.
[5] Interview with Morten, May 2012 and interview with Lawrence, February 2012.

around which survivors of the violence were drawn together.[6] These initial meetings were described as the 'coming together' of the Survivors. Over months and years these meetings condensed into associations and clubs, into informal networks of communication and associations. In some cases these became more organised settlements as the government moved many Survivors, genuinely at risk of personal attack in those early years, into specifically constructed grouped housing which was often on the edge of their previous areas of residence.[7]

Survivors' recollections cast this 'coming together' as relatively spontaneous and rapidly organised but the reality is that many were displaced for months and years afterwards, both in terms of location but also in terms of an identity crisis, a need to refigure (more than once) who they were in relation to each other and the state. This figuration is still settling into place and is governed by ongoing insecurities around who and how 'Survivor' identity can be claims, as evidenced by Clara's concern that she must produce a document certified by the authorities in order to show who she was in relation to past events.

The ability to be identified as a genocide Survivor, a label with very particular characteristics implying both Tutsi ancestry and loss or personal attack in 1994, emerged in conjunction with the government-imposed shifts in the landscape of identity, public memory and other kinds of infrastructure in the years following the genocide.

Suffering Citizens

Rwandan media had been saturated in the years running up to the genocide by extremist political propaganda which capitalized on the armed incursions of the Tutsi-led RPF into Rwanda during the 1990s. This propaganda urged Hutu to 'remember' the (mythical) history of the Tutsi

[6] In fact, in 1995 when Mamdani visited Rwanda survivors of the massacres were already well versed in showing people the sites at which massacres had taken place (Mamdani 2001, Introduction, pp 3-7).
[7] Many people were moved into new settlements as part of the RPF's *imidugudu* policy (Newbury 2011). Within this reorganisation however, the survivors were often given donated housing in specific areas of the villages.

as both non-native incomers and unflatteringly as sly and power-hungry thieves. Propaganda effected not just the embattled Hutu population but Tutsi, who often felt caught in the middle of two potentially hostile encounters, the first in the form of threats from their close at hand neighbours and the second from the people who followed in the footsteps of the RPF, the many Tutsi returning from exile as refugees in other countries. As I have mentioned previously, these people were strangers to many, not just lacking in familial links but often with a language and customs familiar to Uganda, Tanzania and even further afield (Des Forges 1999; Prunier 1995; Sommers 2012, 30-35).

During these incursions and in the early to mid-nineties the RPF was sometimes successful in the recruitment of both Hutu and Tutsi, despite this propaganda. As Des Forges (1999) notes:

> The RPF explicitly disavowed any hostility based on ethnic distinctions and from its earliest days proclaimed a nationalist ideology. This made sense for a group drawn from the minority and aspiring to political power in a situation where ethnic differences had been exaggerated. The RPF called itself *umuryango,* literally a lineage bond or kin group (1999, 1053)

This policy of 'unity' argued that all Rwandans Hutu, Tutsi and Twa had lived in harmony before the imposition of colonial rule and its attendant concern with consolidating categories of identity and attributing them to fixed groups of people (Pottier 2002, 110-116). The RPF would therefore not identify with any ethnic group, in keeping with its policy of 'development' for Rwanda.

It was in real terms impossible to eliminate the 'ethnicity' issue - not least because the country was divided on the basis of ethnicity perhaps even more than it had been in the previous years (as Buckley-Zistal [2009] also points out). Ethnic identity became an absolutely critical matter, of life and death in fact, even as it was concurrently removed from public conversations. Alongside the recruitment drives there was sustained violence committed against Rwandans by RPF soldiers, and ongoing

violence between civilians themselves. Killings by the RPF, whose ranks had in some cases been swelled by Tutsi fleeing the violence from inside Rwanda, were carried out in retribution for the genocide massacres and out of fear that the few people who remained resident in the country must have been somehow involved in perpetrating violence. In amongst these killings were many cases of misidentification. Before the Gacaca Courts were formally initiated in 2001 and with communities often dispersed, or reluctant to speak, there was little way to tell perpetrators from victims. It was sometimes assumed that any remaining persons identified as Hutu must be a perpetrator. Martha, an exhumer-survivor at Nyanza, once told me with a cackle of delight that her then estranged husband had been shot by RPF soldiers because he had successfully presented himself as a Hutu during the massacres in order to save himself, but when the RPF entered his community they did not believe his shift in identity back to Tutsi, and therefore executed him as a presumed member of the *interahamwe*.

Synonymous to this ongoing project of unity, the mid-1990s onwards was characterised by what the International Crisis Group (ICG) calls an 'authoritarian drift' within the RPF (ICG 2002, 10). Despite the commitment to the policies of 'unity', recruitment into the party became increasingly coercive. Rwandans began to talk of the government as a party that favoured Tutsi over Hutu but that carried out this favouritism secretly, under the cloak of the policy of unity in the name of reconciliation. The hope that the RPF might fulfil its promise of a party which considered all Rwandans in equal stead began to dwindle. The RPF became increasingly afraid of competition based on ethnic lines and the civil and political repression that it imposed as a result of that fear caused a large number of supporters both Tutsi and Hutu to abandon the party. This abandonment was usually for exile as the party was frequently accused of assassinating those who instigated political dissent (see Alison Des Forges 1999, 692-793). By 2002 at the end of the transition period defined by the Arusha Accord the ICG (2002) reported that the forthcoming multi-party elections were a façade and that there was little hope that opposition parties

would be able to participate in free and fair elections.

Before we return to the RPF as a 'family' I turn to the formation of citizenship during this time. Buckley-Zistal (2006a) approaches the RPF's 'unity' (as reconciliation) policy specifically in terms of citizenship. An underlying issue with who is able to claim citizenship rights and who is not able has defined and directed the cause and content of conflict in Rwanda at least since Independence. The analysis in Buckley-Zistal's paper on the topic looks specifically at 'top-down citizenship discourses, and their bearing on present reconciliation efforts' (Buckley-Zistel 2006a, 102).[8] The problem, Buckley-Zistal argues, is exactly the top-down nature of the policy. Rwandans are told that "they have to unite" but on the ground in Rwanda the divisions between people was all too apparent (Buckley-Zistel 2006a, 110) – an issue that I also noted frequently and discuss further in this chapter. The issue is made more difficult by the fact that the RPF's politics, particularly its quashing of political opposition and of civil society space under the dictum of preventing 'genocide ideology', which is increasingly in certain cases, becoming understood as a mask for what is an essentially 'anti-Hutu' agenda (Buckley-Zistel 2006a, 111). Thus the RPF appears to reinforce divisions between people on the basis of ethnic identity, even as it argues that such categories of identity should be dismissed.

Citizens are constructed as persons that the state as a nation has certain obligations towards, and as persons with certain duties towards the state. In Rwanda, to be a 'good' citizen, is to demonstrate political allegiance to the RPF and to acquiesce to demands for life to be organised in particular ways. The majority of the rural and urban poor in Rwanda are unable to express grievances against the government, often viewing the RPF-led state as an invasive force which discriminates against them. They cannot on many levels meet the state's demands for 'development' because they do not have access to the upward social and economic mobility to do so, and therefore

[8] Mamdani (2002, 2001) also discusses this issue in detail.

they cannot access full rights as citizens.[9] Full citizenship and the claiming of rights as appropriate to full citizens is arguably only available to wealthier members of the population. Almost always these are members of the urban populace, upwardly mobile, second generation Tutsi exiles who returned after the RPF invasion (Newbury 2005; Prunier 2009).

The genocide Survivors however, occupy a particular position in relation to Rwandan citizenship that allows access to certain rights regardless of wealth. They are much more like the suffering-citizens that Petryna (2002) speaks of in her work on those affected by the Chernobyl radiation disaster in the Ukraine. Under this framing: 'suffering becomes a cultural resource through which people stake their claims for social equity'. After Chernobyl previous residents were able to claim social protection as a result of radiation exposure. This included 'cash subsidies, family allowances, free medical care and education, and pension benefits' (Petryna 2002, 4). It was in this sense that 'the damaged biology of a population becomes the grounds for social membership and the basis for staking citizenship claims' (Petryna 2002, 5). The ability to claim certain rights (and therefore a kind of citizenship) as a result of a specific period of suffering resonates with the situation of the Rwandan Survivors. Petryna speaks of this as a form of 'biological suffering' but in Rwanda the role of the biology of the population is rather more complicated. For instance, although the on-going effects of trauma are claimed through biomedical means, for instance, expressions of distress in relation to the loss of loved ones during the genocide have settled into a specific pathology of 'trauma'. There is certainly a precedent for association with this form of claimant as Wagner (2008) also cites Petryna's work in her discussions around the hierarchies of suffering and entitlement that encircle and are generated by the survivors of the genocide committed in Srebrenica (Wagner 2008, 58-81).

Claiming to be a genocide Survivor and achieving official recognition,

[9] For discussions around the demands made of Rwandans by the state and the claiming of rights, defined variously, see discussions in Sommers (2012); Thomson (2011a); Berry (2015); Ingelaere (2011).

usually through the ability to add a name to the lists of Survivors carried by officials, appeared to me to be an ambiguous process. The people I spoke with had obtained such recognition in a variety of ways. Some had taken part in Gacaca court processes and were awaiting compensatory payments from perpetrators or the restoration of land to them via local courts. Others described their identity as emerging from a patchwork of historical activities, perhaps simply stating that it was 'just known' that they were a Tutsi survivor. Or they would tell me that they attend Survivor meetings and are members of associations such as AVEGA. This was presented as if membership alone evidenced the official nature of their status.

Rather like the Srebrenica massacre widows that Wagner (2008) speaks about, the Rwandan genocide Survivors are also categorised and set apart informally at a community level. The Survivors with whom I worked often complained that they were alienated by the broader community who saw them as unfairly privileged because they receive certain benefits from the state and from humanitarian agencies as a result of their identity. In reality, however, the economic situation was variable and the benefits that belonged to them in principle were sometimes absent or the advantages ambiguous.

Genocide survivor identity did bring with it certain elements of economic and personal security: opening the way for access to government benefits or charitable funds specifically for Tutsi Survivors of genocide. These funds might include a house or money for food and other expenses, and access to schooling and university scholarships for children. The status also granted access to many state backed and independent NGO resources which variously sought to provide genocide Survivors with business enterprise funds, vocational training and a host of other useful things, such as a wealthy, well-connected network of contacts who might be able to assist with employment for example.

For many of the survivor-exhumers who otherwise got by with almost no income and often very limited access to land or other resources, this

assistance was desperately sought after. However, these benefits often also involved problematic backstories, were contingent upon certain strictly defined parameters of need which did not always match with reality, and in some cases were just doubtful in their advantage. For instance, Clara's house, amongst people she 'did not know', was a donation from the government. During later conversation it was revealed that she had been evicted from her previous home because she could not meet the new state imposed building requirements which had been placed upon the land on which her house was built.[10]

School fees were also an issue, assistance with these at both junior and graduate level were generally only available to children who had been born during the genocide. However, many of the Survivors I worked with had started new families after the genocide, or their children were now grown and had had children of their own, none of these individuals could claim assistance. This was the case for Johan who asked me one day, a little embarrassed, if I had money that would help with school fees for his child. Because this child had been born to another woman after the death of his wife during the genocide he was not eligible for state support. His efforts thus far had involved relocating the bodies of his relatives from the land on which they were buried at the back of his house to the local memorial site (see Chapter Six), he now planned to sell the land in order to raise some funds for himself.

The problem of having family members who did not fall within the category of genocide survivor meant that the group were not safe from the financial problems which befell many Rwandans. Karin and Ezra lived in a few rooms attached to shops at the back of Kicukiru market. They had somehow managed to live here with their three very young children without paying any rent, but the buildings were now being sold and they could not afford to move anywhere else. Karin, with whom I had worked at the

[10] New law requires housing in certain parts of cities and their surrounds be two-floors. This means the land can only be purchased and built on by the wealthy who can afford to build multi-story properties.

Nyanza exhumations, shrugged when I asked her if she could not claim some assistance. She implied that her new husband was not eligible for help (presumably because he was not a genocide Survivor). The eviction was particularly problematic because appearing to be homeless, by loitering on the street or putting up temporary street accommodation, as previously mentioned is illegal.

Not all of the exhumers who lived in Kigali were poor. A few of the exhumers could claim to be living in relative comfort. Esme, Samuel, and their young child, lived in a relatively wealthy neighbourhood even if their house was relatively modest in comparison to their neighbours. Similarly, although Sara was living with distant relatives she was housed in a large and comfortable house on the wealthier side of the city. In contrast, almost all of the exhumers who took part in the work at Cyanika were extremely poor with often very limited access to land.

The status of the genocide-Survivors tended to reflect the normal spread of wealth within the population of Rwanda in rural and urban areas, it would therefore not be fair to claim that the exhumer-Survivors were motivated by the small financial gain that came with an association with the identity and perhaps this work specifically. Although genocide Survivors can obtain some form of financial award as a result of their status, this benefit is often ambiguous and in fact it often cost them dearly in terms of personal safety at community level. Several of the group at Cyanika reported that they had been attacked by community members as a result of their actual, or perceived, economic advantage, however small that advantage might be. Many claimed that this went hand-in-hand with the bad feeling which surrounded their public association with the RPF and its memorialisation activities, particularly in the handling of the human remains.

The complication in these claims is that the security of the Survivors is also sometimes compromised because of ill feeling towards Tutsi that remain amongst members of their residential communities. The extent of

this is hard to establish. Opinion about the extent of this ill feeling was divided. It was difficult to tell what seemed sometimes to be residual (and unsurprising) fear born out of experiences during the conflict, and actual threat. I sat with Annabelle one afternoon while she insisted that the neighbourhood was not yet safe for Tutsi Survivors of genocide. Annabelle's very elderly mother had invited herself in during our conversation, found herself a comfortable spot on the other side of the room and sat propped up against the wall with her legs stretched out on the earth floor in front of her. Alongside and often over the top of Annabelle she chatted on happily (presumably misunderstanding the gist of our conversation) about how much better everything was now - "people used to throw stones on the roof of the house but now they don't do those things" - whilst Annabelle gripped my hand tightly and tried to talk ever louder over the top of her Mother. Eventually Hannah, always subtle, pressed her hand against the elderly woman's mouth, and told her to be quiet.

The RPF emphasises strongly that any crimes committed against Tutsi are a result of residual 'genocide ideology' and not provoked by new circumstance. The Officials of Memory and Conservation (see Chapter Two) argued that one of the key purposes of their work was to protect genocide Survivors from these attacks. In many senses this insinuation of potential attack is important (it is probably also true to some degree, although again, there is little nuanced work on these kinds of exchanges) to the state because the idea of an continuing threat to citizens underpins some of the more authoritarian elements of government. In a sense it is also important that these events be understood as elements of a residual ideology and not part of a general, collective undercurrent of bad feeling towards the government as this would undermine the good reputation that Rwanda has gained as country attaining good recovery post-conflict.

The RPF claims to adhere to a liberal democratic form of governances and to a commitment to the levelling and dispelling of ethnic categories of

identity. This strategy of national unification satisfies certain notions of appropriate post-conflict governance, even if those proclamations by the Rwandan government (as in other places) have frequently been dismissed by commentators. As it is, the situation of the genocide Survivors highlights the fragility of both these claims and of those people who have some means and motivation to access the status.

In the next section of this chapter I will take this discussion away from ideals of relatedness according to public proclamations and towards the way in which the RPF undercuts these proclamations by appealing to terminology and practice which traditionally establishes relatedness between kin within an ethnic lineage, most specifically, in this case, in the insinuation of an autochthonous relationship between the RPF elite, Rwanda, and a specially Tutsi lineage through the donation of cows to Tutsi Genocide Survivors. The donation of cows could, given the tenuous nature of its success as a scheme, could simply be framed as a slightly ill-conceived development project, but here I suggest that it could be seen to have subtler implications that speak to a politic of kinship in haphazard formation.

Survivors and the RPF

Associating with the post-genocide Rwandan nation via the medium of 'Survivor' identity is not without difficulty. The Survivors claims in relation to citizenship are dictated by a need to demonstrate violence inflicted upon them in the past as a result of their ethnicity, an ethnicity that is now only publically legitimate when articulated with reference, implicit or explicit, to those violent events. The relevant events are limited to a very narrow period of time and do not take into account family hardships of the post-genocide era. The need to support children or a spouse who originated after the genocide, for instance, are not grounds for claiming support. Claims for assistance are secured only as far as an identity as both Tutsi, and as persecuted, is secured. This puts significant pressure on the need to provide a personal history of suffering which does not challenge

government narrative in relation to genocide. Furthermore, the expectations that arise alongside their identity as Survivors, and the benefits they receive as a result of that identity may expose them to bad feeling from neighbours and others, both because many Rwandans struggling with poverty find it very difficult to claim any assistance from the state, and because reconciliation efforts have not succeeded in assuaging poor relations between neighbours, particularly in rural areas. The survivor-exhumers are often therefore sat, not just at the margins of citizenry (in so far as it is defined above) but also of local communities. This is particularly the case if they live in supported housing which may be clustered together in small groups on the outskirts of communities otherwise located in areas in which the Survivors 'did not know' their neighbours.

Despite these difficulties the survivor-exhumers I worked with were, publically at least, ardent supporters of the RPF. This appeared to differ from the majority of their neighbours for whom political affiliation was apparently a reserved affair. There are obviously important tangible reasons that proclamation of support for the RPF is necessary for the survivor-exhumers. However, I argue here that attachment to the RPF is rather more complicated than a simple relationship of recipient and benefactor.

Umuryango (The Family)

From the outset the RPF called itself the 'the family' using the term '*umuryango*'. In the early 1990s this was part of a rhetoric which advocated for unity and cooperation across ethnic groups in Rwanda. The term was part of the organisation's early work to establish a political upper-hand in Rwanda, an effort to overcome the propaganda and opinion circulated inside Rwanda which labelled the Tutsi ethnic group as a whole as settlers with no claim to 'true' autochthony (see Chapter One for discussion).

I tentatively suggest that part of the persuasive nature of attachment can be seen in the ways in which belonging to the RPF has over the last

decade since the 2002 elections and the end of the political transition period become articulated as a more traditional entanglement of kinship. Examining the history of this attachment also reveals the underlying anxieties of many of the RPF elite, as a government now largely composed of Tutsi only recently returned from exile.

Des Forges (1999, 1053) reports that *umuryango* 'as usually defined included persons descended from a single ancestor and hence of only one ethnicity, the larger unit of *ubwoko* or clan traditionally could encompass Hutu, Tutsi and Twa.' The use of *umuryango* as a phrase of self-definition for the RPF is therefore quite a strange choice for a party arguing that its politics would encompass all ethnic groups.

In reality, rather like all categories of identity, but most particularly in Rwanda, these bounded modes of identification are prone to slippage and redefinition either deliberately or in passive response to changes in circumstance. Despite its origins as an all-encompassing term, for example, *ubwoko* had come to define an ethnic identity by the end of the colonial period, used on identity cards in order to indicate ethnic identity specifically (Prunier 1995, 270).

Umuryango, now also appears to take on an alternative meaning. As the RPF's politics has shifted from a proclamation of "unity" to one which is becoming an increasingly complex field of covert and overt ethnicity, *umuryango* has for the survivor-exhumers at least, begun to implicate a post-genocide 'Tutsi' who comprise both Survivors of the genocide against the Tutsi and the incoming RPF Tutsi elite.

The Survivors used the term '*umuryango wanjye*' frequently to refer to both the specific, often immediate relations they believed were buried in the mass graves, and they also used the same term to refer to the bodies of victims buried in the graves en masse, implying here the bodies in general were of Tutsi origin. There are a number of issues with the use of this label, not least that the Survivors had to work quite hard to maintain this

definition. Or at least, they were in the process of shifting the meaning and identification of these remains in the act of their unearthing and exhumation, work which set aside the issue of acknowledging the fact that there might have been remains in the graves of people with Hutu, Twa or ambivalent ancestry (more on this in Chapter Five).

This articulation of identity was seated at the heart of a relatively complicated relationship between the survivor-exhumers and the state. For the purposes of this analysis I will reduce this to a discussion around the conflation of the survivor- exhumers and of political subjects and 'lineage' members in this context. In line with this conflation the survivor-exhumers use of the term '*umuryango*' begins to take on new significances, particularly in relation to these bones.

The RPF locate political legitimacy in their association with ethnic lineage in Rwanda, even though many of the senior figures may not have been resident in Rwanda for several generations. The majority of the RPF elite also seeks to locate those roots in an autochthonous Tutsi identity.

I discuss this through the donation of cows which were given to the survivor- exhumers by the state following the work of the informants at the mass graves.

Inka (Cows)

> One day I was walking along the main road into the village at Cyanika with Hannah, Rebecca and Quentin when a man in a threadbare suit, a person I'd never met before, stepped out onto the path in front of me. The man shouts at me in Kinyarwanda: "why do you not give cows to us? … It is not fair! You develop them and not us!". The frustration in his voice was palpable as the group of men he is with anxiously try to usher him away. Those walking along the path around us tut and shake their heads with disapproval. A by- passer stops and offers apologies: "it is not good for him to

> say those things" she says, insinuating that he is drunk and not to be listened to. The man is Twa, Quentin tells me, and today a charity is here to give cows to members of the community. The man has assumed that, as a *muzungu*, I must work for the charity.
>
> When the path reaches the football field at the top of Cyanika village we discover the event in progress. A very large canvas tent with a stage has been set-up. A sound system is playing extremely loud pop music. It is a bizarre spectacle relative to the very rural surroundings. The tent also appears completely empty of local attendees at that moment, aside from a few apparently bemused bystanders gawking at it from a distance.[11]
>
> The tent it turns out had been constructed as part of the handing over of cows donated by Jeanette Kagame to vulnerable Survivors within the vicinity of Cyanika. Several of my informants were absolutely delighted to have been given a cow by the fund. When I visited again, a few weeks after the cows had been delivered there was talk almost of nothing else.
>
> **EDITED FROM FIELDNOTES MAY 2012**

The cows had been paid for by the IMBUTO Foundation, a charitable fund administered by the First Lady, Jeanette Kagame. The website declares these donations to fulfil two purposes: during the genocide, many cattle belonging to Tutsi and others were killed, often tortured to death in very similar ways to their human counterparts. The return of cows was billed as a reparation for the 'dignity' that the death of cattle had removed. The donation of cattle also met developmental aims of providing sustainable resources, the idea being that the cattle would provide milk and meat for poor households to consume or sell. However, the gifting of the cows to the survivor-exhumers had more complicated implications and outcomes.

[11] We later discover the local officials who were due to attend the event in a nearby bar, so perhaps the ceremony was yet to get underway…

The donated cows were not 'traditional' Rwandan cattle, a reddish-brown breed with famously long horns. The donated cattle were black and white Friesian (or possibly hybrid Friesian). When I queried the difference in breed with the survivor-exhumers I was told that the Friesian had been chosen because they were "modern cows". Apparently these were selected over the Rwandan breed because of a potentially higher milk yield. These cows were not only different in breed, the changes in land use and the *imidugudu* (villagization) policy meant that, unlike traditional cattle which were grazed over fields, these cows would be kept in small sheds close to the home of the owners. The cows were largely static as there was very little grazing land available for them.

I visited Cyanika a few weeks after the arrival of the first cattle. Cows are customarily extremely precious commodities, and ownership created both delight and tremendous anxiety for those who had received them (along with frustration for those who had not). Walking from house to house to visit the survivor-exhumers and talk over their cows was one of the most enjoyable aspects of my fieldwork, but the conversations and encounters also revealed that what was a greatly appreciated benefit for some was an odd imposition for others. Overall, the donations certainly implied something more than a simple attempt to alleviate poverty.

Evelyn's house was located a half an hour's walk from the back of the memorial site, through maize fields and around the MTN mobile phone tower that dominated the horizon behind the mass graves. Evelyn now lived alone, her daughter, adopted following the death of Evelyn's own children and husband during the genocide, had married and moved away. The walled backyard of her home housed hutches of rabbits, numerous chickens, an ingenious rain water collection tank, and the stable for the cow. Her stable was sectioned off into two rooms, one for the cow to stand in leaving the other section free for her to clean. Evelyn was without a doubt an expert at animal husbandry, and the cow was a very valuable addition to her small array of livestock. The extensive routine and

adaptations to the stable she had put in place to manage the cow were astonishing and very ingenious. I asked Evelyn if she was happy to receive the cow and she shrieked about how much attention she lavished upon it. “I brush his hair” she said impishly implying a careful coiffing of the strands hanging over the cows eyes, “… I play him the radio, and I sing to him!” she added while the group small children who had arrived to listen to our conversation fell about in giggles.

I had noticed that many people who kept the cows had been plagued with the difficulty of locating the very lush green grasses that the cows were thought to consume exclusively, an idea that Evelyn snorted at when I mentioned it. Her cow was fed a complicated combination of different leaves and grasses which could be found in the vegetation around her house, she spent some time detailing her recipe for appropriate cattle feed, including some information on leaves which were used for treating medical conditions. I tried not to look at Julia during this conversation. I suspected that she would be cross if she knew I had orchestrated our group visit with Evelyn, in the hope that this might be helpful in alleviating her struggles with her own cow. Julia’s situation perhaps exemplified unusually starkly how significant the cows were as a symbolic gesture, as opposed to a particularly efficient and sustainable resource that was appropriate to everyone. In fact, Evelyn’s success with the Friesian cattle seemed very unusual, on the whole it seemed to me that the cows were not ideally suited to their task here. The notion of a high milk yield was helpful in principle but the cows were also prone to illness which made this milk yield difficult to sustain. Several of those who received cattle had never owned any before and seemed almost afraid of them.

Julia had grown up, it seemed, in-between several households in the neighbourhood after her own parents had been killed in the massacre at Cyanika when she was seven. A friend described with exasperation the efforts his parents had made to try and make her go to school. She soon dropped out however and her troublesome behaviour and difficulties with

the police led to her eventual exile from the household. She was now living alone aside from her six year old daughter in a house that had been given to her because she was a genocide orphan. She told me vaguely that the Father of her child had "gone away".

Julia had no idea how to look after her cow and its imposition was a source of great frustration. Her years, apparently as a drifter between other people's houses, meant that she had not previously undertaken any form of agricultural work, or at least none to which she admitted, nor did she have any wish to, spending most of her evenings in the local bars. This cow was really a problem, complained Julia, now she could not leave the house empty because her neighbours would cause her problems, and she could not afford to employ someone to look after the cow for her. To make matters worse she attributed her current bout of ill health to the vegetation that she had to root through to find the grass, and she did not have the patience or experience to collect the leaves without badly cutting her hands. She would arrive to meet me with red weeping eyes, complaining of a headache, and wearing thick gloves: "I'm going to take that cow to the clinic and change it for medical treatment!" she shouted one day.[12]

Julia was an eccentric character but her exclamation about medical care usefully pointed at the frustrations of a situation in which she felt burdened by a gift, whilst struggling to access medical treatment to which she felt she should be entitled. Her cow might produce milk which she could drink, but this would not produce cash revenue, in part because it was not likely that she would be able to sell the milk, given that one, if not two of her immediate neighbours also had a cow that was expected to yield similarly large amounts of milk, and also because her relationship with her other neighbours appeared to be quite hostile (Julia did not live in neighbourhood composed exclusively of genocide Survivors as some of the older women did).

[12] Julia referred to the local district clinic in Cyanika, which was sometimes accessible to those with limited funds but did not appear to offer Julia any free access to medication.

In fact Julia complained that her neighbours frequently burgled her house and that the arrival of the cow had made this problem worse. One day she arrived at the site looking bedraggled and upset, claiming that her neighbours had attacked her on the path into town. Julia may have been in a particularly vulnerable position because she was a young single woman who often spent her evenings in the cafés and bars in Nyamagabe Town, an occupation which did not permit her good moral standing in the eyes of the rest of the community. But the cows were genuinely a security risk for many, their arrival and distribution amongst these very specific members of the communities was problematic.

I met with Joshua where he lived with his child and members of an extended family in a small house at the top of a steep mud bank in the amongst the rural villages on the outskirts of town. He was very proud of his cow, although he had never previously owned one, although he also seemed characteristically laden with anxiety about its wellbeing. “I think that cow hates me”! he lamented. “He tries to hit me with his horns”. We all looked at the cow which swayed moodily at us from its stable. It was difficult to find grass he admitted and it was expensive to buy. Although he had planted a small field of grass seeds it was difficult to see how such a small patch of land could satisfy the cows voracious appetite.

Joshua also spoke quietly of the ‘problem’ of appearing to his neighbours as if he had money, particularly that he had been given money as a result of his activities at the exhumation site. As the conversation with the angry man at the roadside above indicated, the donation of cows was seen to be an unfair advantage that was being bestowed upon specific groups of the population.

As gifts, these cows were laden with heavy symbolic intention which, I would argue, is the primary intention of their donation.[13] As resources they

[13] It seemed to me otherwise that it would have been far better to give the survivors goats, better houses or any other number of ‘sustainable’ resources if that was the primary intention of the gift.

appeared to be quite problematic for the bearer. However, as gifts of reparation for the losses that Tutsi had suffered as a result of the genocide they were highly significant.

As Taylor (1992) points out:

> Cattle are always positively valued in Rwandan culture, as is anything associated with them. Cow's urine, for example, is often used directly as a remedy or mixed with other substances in popular medicine. Cattle were celestial *Imáana*'s gift to terrestrial humanity. They unite the elements of sky, water, and earth. The gift of cattle originated in the sky, for at one time only *Imáana* possessed them. This gift then passed from the sky through the waters of a lake onto a land. Cattle mediate between sky and earth, just as rain passes from sky to earth. As with rain, the circulation of cattle has to be socially ordered. (Taylor 1992, 73)

Cows are exchanged as highly significant gifts in marriage, births and death. These exchanges are critical as they symbolise the interlinking or continuation of lineage or family ties. In traditional funeral practice the member of a family who buries the body of a relative is given "a cow to get out of the pit" by other members of the family.[14] As Grace pointed out, if a person gifts a cow, that cow is given the name of the donor. All of the calves that are born from that original cow retain the same name as the original and all retain some ties and are owned, in some ways, by the original donor.

The milk of cows is also tied in very many ways to the symbolic reproduction of persons, to economic wealth and to more traditional conceptualizations between the body of state power and its cosmological ties to the land. Such is the importance of cow's milk to the reproduction of persons that Taylor (1992) labels it a "social fluid", analogous to that of "blood, semen, [and] maternal milk" (105).

Thus the gift of a cow is sat at the heart of the reproduction of persons, of

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Cooperative initiatives that are a very popular amongst Rwandans very rarely focus on cows. In fact, when the survivors at Cyanika approached me to ask if I would support a cooperative venture they had come up with themselves, it was to raise chickens for their eggs.

[14] Interview with Grace, May 2012

kin, and to more traditional reproductions which link the body of political power to the celestial body of *Imáana.*

Across the broad swathe of histories which are tied to Rwanda, including the reformed historiography which the RPF have implemented, cows are also clearly tied to a definition and reproduction of Tutsi ethnic identity. Their donation by the RPF to the genocide Survivors would therefore seem highly significant, it is both a reparation but also a statement about the continued security and productive potential of a ethnic lineage.

Although the exact form of ethnicity is hotly debated topic in Rwanda there is no doubt that cows, and their ownership are of critical significance to Tutsi identity. Cows were an integral part of the historical patron/client ties, the network of relationships which have become one of the central points around which the memory of ethnic division has been debated. Traditionally, the identity Tutsi was closely entangled with that of cattle ownership and it was ownership of cattle that brought with it particular advantages in social and economic status. This is not a straight- forward history, rather as the division of people along ethnic lines has been a fluid and changing dynamic, so to has the association between Tutsi and cattle.[15] However, cows and their association with Tutsi also became part of the mythical histories which drove forward the genocide, so close was this association that during the genocide massacres cattle were often killed in similar ways to people (Taylor 1999).

There is a need for members of the RPF to make some link between their histories and that of lineages in Rwanda, despite their exile. Jeanette Kagame, the wife of the President of Rwanda and Head of the RPF, Paul Kagame, had in fact emphasised at the Cyanika interment service her own historical family roots to the land around Cyanika prior to her exile. Significantly many of the exhumers saw the cows as gifts from 'Jeanette Kagame' and had never heard of the IMBUTO Foundation.

[15] Newbury (1988) contains some detailed discussion of the shifts in this association between ethnic identity and cattle herding.

Given the issues outlined and the significances of such a gift to the production and reproduction of kin with a specifically Tutsi grouping, it is hard to see how the donation of the cattle by the state could not be understood as part of a formation of association along lines of lineage, and of ethnicity, even if those ties are situated within a broader framing which encompasses notions of nation and of state citizenship. There would seem to be a critical similarity between the reference to the restoration of 'dignity' through the return of cows, and the return of 'dignity' that was mentioned very frequently in reference to the exhumation of human remains and the placement of these remains within the memorials. However, as I will go onto discuss human remains are highly problematic materials, they resist formation and secure identity in ways which confound attempts to employ them as useful objects, or as settled and coherent subjects.

Conclusions: Exhuming 'Our People' (*Umuryango Wanjye*)

This chapter argues that the genocide-Survivors had found for themselves association with a category of identity, of kinship, that is in formation, as born out of the present political and social conditions. This identity linked the survivor-exhumers in some way to the RPF elite, although the security of that connection is extremely tenuous and profoundly hierarchical, with the survivor-exhumers dominated by an elite that interferes with and limits their livelihoods (as it does for other Rwandans).

At the exhumation sites it often appeared as if this identity, and the relationship between the state and the Survivors had both reached a particularly critical and fragile moment of formation.

As I will discuss in the following chapter the exhumations echo archaeological or forensic practice in their scaffolding, in the way in which the remains are removed and categorised according to type, in the imposition of biomedical techniques of governing the dead which include

the provision of gloves and face masks intended to separate the living from the material remains of the dead. It was an imposition which the Survivors roundly resisted. Ada complained often about the protective gloves and mask, especially as her hands were arthritic and fitting them into the rubber gloves required the assistance of two people. “Why do I have to wear these things” she complained loudly each time “I am not afraid to touch these bodies, they are ‘my people’”. This was a beginning of an interesting disjuncture between the approach of the Survivors to these human remains and that of the state.

The way in which the bodies were managed at the point of exhumation (very little was said about the memorialisation process) became an axis for frisson with the state. This frisson very literally and viscerally rejected the kind of organisation that the state imposed upon the site.

One particular occasion at the culmination of the exhumation at Nyanza was pivotal in understanding this. It was related to me after the event had happened by a number of the Survivors. At the time I had been away from the site for a couple of weeks due to a leg injury. When I returned everyone wanted to give me their version of this story, which varied in its levels of extremity in the way that exciting gossip often does.

A rumour had been brewing amongst the survivor-exhumers for several days that some of the bed sheets that had been wrapped around the corpses when they were removed from the mass graves had gone missing. At some point accusations had begun flying around that the manual labourers who had been employed by IBUKA to heave around heavy lumps of concrete were responsible for the theft. These people were widely understood (although never publically declared) to be Hutu. Each group had certainly kept its distance from one another throughout the exhumation work when I had been in attendance.

At some point these rumours had reached the Director of the IBUKA whose office sat on the upper floor of the building which backed onto the

site. He had marched down to the grave sites, somewhat imperiously, and spoken to Matthew, a university student and also a genocide survivor. Matthew had lost his entire family to the genocide massacres, although they were not buried here but at another community grave site over the hill. Unfortunately the Director made a substantial error. He mistook Matthew for one of the manual labourers and launched into a speech about how he did not hold any grudges against 'their people' but that we should all work together. Matthew became hysterical, descending into the screaming and convulsions that normally characterise 'genocide trauma'. The 'trauma' then spread around the whole site so that all of the exhumers were effected, "even the security guard," one woman told me with particular delight. The exhumers chased the Director of the organisation into his office and refused to let him out. Police and medics were called to try and calm the situation. It is important to understand that this is gossip, rather than recollection, the officials were somewhat sullen about relating the incident afterwards and the survivor-exhumer stories varied greatly - some claimed with great enthusiasm that the Director had been shut in his office for days … Ada shook her head and denied most of the event, pointing out that Matthew had always been a troubled person, and that she herself had had to spend several hours convincing him to leave the organisation's hall one night, when it was full of bones.

The opening up of the graves and the work that took place alongside them thus revealed more than the patronage ties between the state and the Survivors. It began to unravel the form of the relationship between them. Mortuary and funeral processes are widely acknowledged to be particularly risky and productive spaces. Sites at which the relationships between individuals are reformed in association with the reorganisation of both the identity and body of the deceased. It is to the exhumation sites and the unearthing of the human remains that I turn to in the next chapter.

Chapter Five: Exhumation

Introduction

Survivor-exhumers often commit to the exhumations in the belief that the bodies buried within the mass graves are the remains of people with whom they were familiar in life. The exhumers view the remains as remnants of people with whom they share a bond of Tutsi kinship. The concern, physical labour and personal time given over to the work is in part a testimony to that belief. When the graves are opened however, the exhumations do not involve, or not initially at least, the confrontation with a familiar or recognizable dead body. In the initial phase this work is a struggle to bring clarity to the often mysterious contents of the graves.

This chapter is built around a detailed description of the exhumation events at Cyanika. At the beginning of this transformative work a muddy mass is lifted out of the mass graves and piled up in front of the group of survivors. At the culmination of the sorting and 'washing' that follows this mass is whittled down and separated out. Neat piles of bones lie on sheets of tarpaulin stretched out in the sun on the side of the hill. Inside the dark dank sheds that surrounded the exhumation site the fleshy remnants of corpses lie on similar tarpaulins.

The dead piled into these pits in 1995 had been decaying for twenty years, bodies once given shape by skin and muscle (and clothing) have lost their structural integrity. They are no longer bodies but murky and diffuse substances. As a result the survivor-exhumers face exhumed matter that slides back and forth between that which is recognizable as the remnant of a human (skulls, limb bones and mummified bodies for example), that which is definitely not the stuff of the human body (domestic rubbish and animal bones perhaps) and that which is difficult to define at all - this might include fragments which could be bone but might not be, the soft matter of the body that has leaked into soil, clothes which still house

elements of the corpse, bits of decaying flesh, and things ambiguous in their corporeality - artificial limbs, surgical inserts, or hairpieces for instance. Much of the initial work of transforming or of "washing" these remains comprises a laborious searching, a disentangling, and negotiating of category for these things which emerge from the indeterminate exhumed mass.

Exhumers frequently mentioned the need to offer 'dignity' to the dead whose bodies had not received this attention at their deaths and their work fulfilled that aim in some ways. Once identified as such, human remains were handled as the body of a person would be handled and spoken about. The fragments would be carefully washed as the body of the deceased might be washed. However, this act was the only clear association between the transformation work that accompanied the exhumations and the purpose and form of more commonplace mortuary attendance in Rwanda. Even where this similarity with mortuary practice was present it was in contorted and drastically altered form, complicated and pushed in particular directions because of the need to re-substantiate bodies that were otherwise absent or incoherent.

It was also important to the exhumers that this process be understood as new and unfamiliar. The malleability of the human remains that were recovered from the graves was both distressing and useful, the inherent plasticity carried with these substances was harnessed by the exhumers in their attempts to manipulate the remains. The relative absence of whole and coherent bodies and the presence of powerful substances in place of that wholeness opened up space for innovative action and outcome.

The task that the exhumers organized for themselves, albeit with significant struggle, was both to draw out the human remains from the soil and to temper that emergence so that human remains became distinct from other things but did not draw too closely towards discrete individuals. The bones and flesh of people emerge in this process through the physical

handling of the remains, handling that both literally and conceptually defines the edges of the things removed from the graves. In the care that is exercised upon certain remains the thing is defined as a person and a familiar. Despite these attentions, a careful balance was managed between the emergence of persons from the soil and the distancing of the possibility of inscribing, re-inscribing, or retaining the inscription of individual personhood.

In the case of these exhumations then, the corpse that should be attended to is completely distorted, the substances that comprise the distorted body are largely unfamiliar, and the constitution of the emotive presence of the dead, and thus of the bodies, is very particular. The nuances of that presence will be explored over the next three chapters. I focus here on the very beginnings of the re-substantiated dead bodies and their successful or unsuccessful emergence as persons and/or emotive substances. In discussing this issue I speak to new scholarship which urges a renewed attention to the issue of materials, human and nonhuman, and their place in the world. I draw attention to those arguments of the 'new materialism' which articulate discrete 'things' as temporary entities drawn aside from what is otherwise an inchoate flow of matter. I argue that these arguments bear strong resemblance to the concept of 'flow' and 'blockage' and its application to substance, an understanding which frames everyday meaning in Rwanda. A confrontation of this issue opens up the exhumers struggles with exhumed matter and the substances that emerge from it as part of a mortuary ritual which will attenuate the living, and ascribe a new identity for the dead. At the same time this attention exposes the ways in which these moments of the liminal, of the in-between in both substance and in ascribed meaning, is exploited by the state for a purpose which cannot help but be at odds with that of the exhumer-survivors.

The Exhumation at Cyanika: What Remains?

Those killed inside the church and in the grounds of the Catholic Mission at Cyanika in 1994 lay on open ground inside the walled church compound and within the church itself for days, perhaps weeks afterwards. Eventually the bodies were gathered together with corpses retrieved from surrounding lands and shovelled or bulldozed into pits on land behind the buildings. The bodies remained buried in thick and damp soil for twenty years until the 2012 exhumation.

Casual workers spent weeks hacking at the soil of the grave pits with farming tools, swinging implements forcefully into the ground, catching, lifting and displacing layers of soil. Most stripped to the waist or left tattered shirts hanging open, the inside of the pit humid as they dug - six feet, ten feet and further. A massive volume of soil was shifted and the work had to be attentive to avoid breaking-up significant contents. Although the pits were deep the first of several thousand bodies were located close to the surface. The corpses had almost always decayed to the extent that only disarticulated fragments remained, the clothing had become a shredded brown mass of textiles. Gradually and with painstaking persistence these layers of bone, fleshy bodies, body fragments and sodden clothing were unearthed. The excavators peeled soil away from the compacted layers and used their hands to pull out the bones and clothing, occasionally, substantially fleshy bodies or body parts emerged and these were extracted in lumps with the impacted soil that surrounded them. All of these items were moved onto sheets of tarpaulin stretched out at the side of the graves.

After a tarpaulin was filled it was gathered together at the seams, heaved onto the back of a truck and driven a short distance to the base of the hill where a small area for transforming the remains had been organized. A huddle of empty brick sheds (an abandoned NGO food station) surrounded an open square within which an elaborate canopied shelter had

been constructed from tarpaulins and wooden pole supports. Underneath the shelters two large shallow contained areas at ground level had been created, the edges of sheets of tarpaulin turned up and attached to wooden stakes which were hammered into the soil. A shallow pool of water had been added to the inside of these tarpaulins, and the exhumed matter, once hoisted off the back of the truck, was placed in the center of the contained space. Around the edges of the tarpaulins wooden benches and plastic chairs were arranged for the people who would carry out the next stage of the transformation.

Exhumation at Cyanika, author's photograph, 2012

It was here that I first came to know the genocide survivor-exhumers at Cyanika. Early in the morning the group would begin to appear in rattling public buses and on foot over the hills from surrounding villages. Some would loiter by the church inspecting the mass graves and gossiping about the work still to be done or the look of the layer of the pit uncovered on the previous day. Eventually, the twenty or thirty people, would filter into the canopied area to take up their seats. The elderly women would sit together in select groups at the far side of the shelter and engage in quiet gossip. The remainder of the group would squeeze themselves onto a bench on the opposite side. I was allocated a place here, in between Pierre, a quiet middle-aged man, and Sarah, a young woman from a village on the far side of the hills. This seemed to everyone's liking as I could easily be observed by the group for the purposes of commentary and entertainment.

Although the exhumers working inside the graves had dug out matter that they felt to include or largely consist of human remains, the corpses had been entangled and broken, shifted and mashed during their burial so that when the exhumed pile was placed onto the tarpaulins it appeared as a lumpy mixture of bone and many other things, including soil. Much of the "washing" that followed comprised a laborious separating and categorizing of the contents of this exhumed mass so that its constituents might (not always successfully or completely) emerge as bones, bone fragments, flesh, clothing, personal possessions and nonhuman detritus.

After the initial bustle of arrivals and with travelling clothes tucked away under chairs and benches, bowls would be filled with washing powder and water, rags and toothbrushes would be gathered together, and work would fall into a fairly monotonous routine. One member of the group would fill buckets with materials from the pile in the centre of the tarpaulin-containers. The bowl would be passed around the benches that lined the canopied space. Each person or pairs of persons would have placed a washing-up bowl at their feet, ready-filled with frothy washing water. A sloppy mass would be splashed from the initial tarpaulin gathering into each individual bucket. The items that were placed in the buckets would be removed one- by-one by the handlers. The surface would be scrubbed with a toothbrush or rag, rinsed with water and passed onto another person who would rinse it again and place it aside in a dry bucket.

Full buckets of washed bones were carried over to a tarpaulin stretched out on the hillside outside the tent. Several of the group would stand there, picking out the bones and laying them out to dry. At Cyanika the bones were sorted into 'type' on the basis of simple visual categorization. Sometimes when my back would no longer suffer the endless hours hunched over the buckets I would go and work with this group. The long limbs of both arms and legs would be placed together in one space. The skulls would be lined up carefully, all facing the same way. Ribs would be

placed together. The jumble of bones from the hands and feet and small fragments would be placed together. Pelvic girdles would be matched up and so on. These would eventually be placed into buckets in their piles, or picked up in the tarpaulins and carried into a brick outhouse next to the memorial until the time came for their placement on shelves inside the building.

Exhumation at Cyanika, author's photograph, 2012

Once the graves were opened and matter exhumed from them, the first task was to search among the contents in order to find those things which could be identified as a human remain. As each item from the washing-up bucket was handled the first task was often to decide which of these things were pieces of human bodies and which were not - wood, animal bone, or manmade detritus perhaps. Establishing certainty could be difficult. Many of the survivors were unfamiliar with the appearance of human bone and the experience that individuals or groups of individuals could draw upon depended on the number of exhumations that each had attended. Even those who had attended multiple exhumations might struggle to separate animal from human bone. Certain whole bones emerged from the mass of the exhumation as the most confident and (unlike soft flesh) the most manageable indicators of the presence of a human body. Thus the long arm and leg bones were shaken free first; ribs, the pelvic girdle (hip), scapula (shoulder blade), the vertebrae (sections) of the spine, skulls or jaw bones sometimes with teeth, and smooth curved fragments of cranium, all were easily picked out and set aside. Skulls in particular were favoured over

other remains - satisfaction would be publically expressed if a particularly 'good' skull was located, meaning one in which the structure of the cranium was relatively intact. There would be rumbles of annoyance if anyone was felt to be monopolizing the washing of skulls, consistently choosing these bones and not the limbs or, worse, ignoring the endless buckets of small fragments.

In amongst the relatively familiar items would be more problematic, misshapen or unusual bones - a very large and heavy vertebrae, something that seemed to be a scapula but was so small and delicate that it was almost transparent - and in amongst these would be completely diffuse shards of materials often resembling the consistency of bone but with little coherent form. Perhaps the thing, or the fragment, initially looked like it could be a bone with a pale colour and a fibrous solid form but on closer inspection the surface was punctured with a thousand tiny holes which gave it the weight and texture of something more akin to a sponge. The handler is presented with a dilemma. Was this an unusual human bone? Or was it an animal bone? Was it an item of rubbish? Should it be placed with the other human bones or maybe we were contaminating these with an item of rubbish, of plant matter - articles that we had been working so hard to separate from the remains?

Osteoarchaeologists, who must also recognize and organize skeletal fragments will often hold bones up to a skeletal image in locating their anatomical origin (see for instance, discussions in Sofaer 2006). For the exhumers at Cyanika and Nyanza the presence of their own body and others becomes a similar critical tool of recognition. Handlers might lean long bones up to their own leg or arm, or perhaps hold a fragment up the chest or jaw of the person next to them in order to verbally reassure themselves or others from which section of the body this might have originated. Some bones defied easy identification. Novice exhumers would be confused by the odd shape of the tail bone, or the small

fragments of the feet and hands. If the item was very perplexing, discussion would follow and a group consensus would be established. Thus the heavy vertebrae becomes part of the spine of a cow, and the tiny transparent scapula-shaped bone belongs to a child. If no consensus was reached the bone might be put to one side for inspection by the state official or pressed upon the attendant ethnographer who would usually refuse to offer an opinion much to the chagrin of the group. If rejected the item would instantly be thrown into nearby undergrowth. In this way the exhumers demonstrate a significant influence over what the emergent human remains consist. Through the close handling of matter, in touch, smell and sight, the exhumers often draw the line between what is to be removed and what is to be recognized as human substance.

As Crossland (2009) points out, corpses are highly malleable - this is part of the danger and potential in their entry and entanglement with other things. Yet, what is managed at the Rwandan exhumations is even more potent and undefined. These substances are otherwise in flow, often not distinctly separate from the soil or the graves around them (Fontein 2010). The exhumers therefore have a significant influence over what the emergent body will consist of, they are able to draw the line between what is to be rejected as human substance (even where in other conceptual frameworks it would be retained), and what is material of the human body that will be kept. Whole and largely unbroken bone, for example, was an enduring fixation for the exhumers. The particular substance of bone had often allowed it to maintain its coherence so that when it is removed from the graves it was possible to imaginatively locate it within the structure of a living body. Bones are solid, they are ‘clean-able’, a cloth wrung with soap and water can easily be pressed onto the surface, and will often permit a satisfactory vigorous scrubbing. With the ‘best’ bones the surface after cleaning shines. It is almost white, in antithesis to the dank soiled fragments removed from the graves. On the other hand, the exhumers manipulated and discarded what might otherwise be considered biological

material. For example, although a great deal of trouble was taken to avoid bone crumbling, the exhumers sometimes scraped out the fibrous cartilage on the inside of the bones with a metal rod, largely because the soil was otherwise impossible to rinse out; burnt-on flesh was often aggressively scraped off to produce a surface that appeared 'clean'. Despite moments of satisfaction, even certainty, much of the work was frustrating and the stuff that was handled was not conducive to manipulation. Bones did not behave as the handler wanted them to –skulls collapsed into pieces as they were washed, the thousands of tiny fragments of what was thought to be bone were difficult to handle carefully. And the ideal notion of a materially amenable surface that could be washed was a reality that the bones often did not meet – they were sometimes soft and grey and collapsed into pieces. Some of the bodies had been burnt and the bones were blackened and sticky where the flesh had melded onto the surface, a substance almost impossible to remove. Sometimes the bone fractured because the cleaner was tired or impatient and misjudged the fragility or sturdiness of a particular fragment. The interaction with the remains required an exhausting and constant negotiation, in which both the handler and the exhumed substance define the limits of possible transformation.

The bones and other human remains that ultimately emerge from this work therefore sit at the interplay between the desires and wishes of the exhumers (to be able to clean a surface, to see a bone shine because it has been polished) and the properties and past histories of both the things that may or may not become human remains (the stickiness of burnt flesh, the jagged surface of cartilage where a bone has been broken, the smooth outside of bone where it has been kept in a dry vault, as was the case at the Nyanza exhumation) and the other things that are caught in association with these things (the properties of the soil that surrounded them, the weather on the day of the exhumation, the proximity of water to the site, the particular materials that were provided).

As Ingold (2007) has reminded us, it is the properties of materials that are important in their interaction with the world, rather than their conceptual distinction as one thing separate from another. Thus the technicalities of bodily decay and the properties of the materials that they are intermingled with – the apparent cohesion of bone and the fluidity of decaying flesh for instance – have a significant and enduring influence over the events and relationships in which they are embedded.

Jane Bennett also asks us to pay appropriate attention to a world of things across more symmetrical planes, emphasising the potential agency inherent in all materials, both human and nonhuman, and of the necessity of those things to exist in collective, forming assemblages or networks through which that agency emerges (Bennett 2005; Bennett 2003). It is then through a collaborative kind of work, in the midst of a particular assemblage, that we can understand the human remains emerging as discrete things with very particular force. In the difficult work of coaxing what will be bodies from the soil, in the frisson or harmony between the things involved in that process these human remains also emerge as things which do something more than the commonly accepted function of buried remains in Rwanda, something more for instance, than tagging a particular group of people to a specific area of land, as is the commonly accepted function of graves.

Understanding this emergence means confronting human remains as having a vitalism, that capacity which Bennett, citing Thoreau, calls 'the wildness of things' (Bennett 2003, 348). As Fontein and Harries (2013b) point out there is a need therefore to:

> attend to the conceptual affordances of things, while simultaneously tracking the myriad ways that people set about the work of constituting things as social objects. This work of constitution does not somehow precede the materialization of things and substances; rather it channels, sometimes ineffectually and incompletely, the excessive potentiality of matter, what Pinney calls the 'torque of materiality' (2005, 268-269), into

> determinate cultural forms. Human remains are at once these forms and yet, are also that which has the capacity to exceed these forms and therefore defy the temporary stabilization of the 'thing' into social object or subject (Fontein and Harries 2013b, 119)

Fillippucci et al approach this issue of the 'excess' of things in relation to the act of unearthing specifically. The thing that is taken from the pile of exhumed matter becomes a human bone at the point at which that thing, the survivor-exhumer, and the other human and nonhuman accouterments around it, enter into 'transformative and relational material processes of becoming' (Filippucci et al. 2012, 3).

Human remains become a special aside to other kinds of artefacts because they resist settling into coherent objects. They remain 'things', set in a perpetual state of becoming, or unearthing (both literally and conceptually). Their status as both 'of us and not of us' lends them a permanent state of the liminal, of the in-between:

> they seem to possess a spectral quality that elides the normative distinctions between dead and alive, past and present temporalities, in that they are not simply present as things but in this presence also suggest an absence, a some*thing* else that they are but also are not (Filippucci et al. 2012, 16)

This ambiguity was evident at the mass graves where the materials, bones, flesh and other remains, could lend themselves towards personhood or they could not, or more specifically exhumed substances either have the material qualities that allow an easy assertion of presence as a person, or that presence is much more complex, in some cases defying purposeful containment or expression.

Mortuary rites are practiced responses to the material and social crisis that arises when a death occurs (see Bloch and Parry 1982). Mortuary work attempts to attenuate or otherwise direct the 'unbecoming' of the biological body, and thus the attendant shift in both individual personhood and broader social community as the process of dying takes place. I discuss the ways in which the exhumations should be thought of as a form of mortuary

process, albeit a process which must necessarily be both innovative and ultimately unsatisfactory. In approaching these issues I touch upon concepts of the body in Rwanda. The construction of the meaningful world in Rwanda through a balance between 'flow' and 'blockage' that is embedded in (and through) all things shapes both the 'problem' of these violated remains, and the approach to that problem. The concept speaks to the broader scholarship of 'new materialism' in interesting ways. I discuss the connotations of this demanding agency of the remains, as both captivating and problematic for the survivor-exhumers and for the state in whose hands the remnants of the corpses emerge in slightly different forms.

"*Personnes ni benshi*": The people are many

> "Personne ni benshi," sighed Julia as a truck reversed towards the tarpaulin with another new pile of exhumation material on the back. I sighed a little too, this had been the fourth or fifth truckload of the day and the material was near the base of the grave, sticky and thick with clay, and very difficult to 'wash'. 'The people are many!' Julia had said, in her strange mixture of French and Kinyarwanda, but what was on the back of the truck was not yet persons, it was a tangled and undefined mass of stuff. Julia's statement was in part one of hope, for both she and the other exhumers hoped that these many 'people' would emerge from the materials that were dumped onto the tarpaulin sheets.
>
> **EDITED FROM FIELD NOTES, CYANIKA, 2012**

The exhumation at the Rwandan graves sometimes resembled archaeological or forensic process, particularly in the careful separating and washing of bone as I have described above. However, despite the similarities in method, these actions were undertaken with very different means and ends in mind. There was no attempt by the exhumers for instance to establish cause of death, because there was no question amongst

the exhumers as to how these people had died (see Chapter Two for a discussion on the bodies as evidence of the genocide). These were the bodies of victims of violence committed by one person against another and the exhumers understood the evidence of this to be inherent in the context in which they worked, in the removal of the bodies from mass graves, in the fact that they were inappropriately and casually comingled in burial and apparently unprepared for death. Any further evidence of violence upon the bodies - a bullet hole in a skull or the marks of a machete - were pointed out to me as further curiosity for a visitor, the handlers of the remains rarely commented upon these things. Nor was there an attempt, as I will discuss here and in Chapter Six, to identify the remains as those of once-living persons, any identification was almost happenstance and quickly put to one side – the bodies that would be drawn from the exhumations were understood to hold a very particular and collective identity which was set apart from the broader biography of the individual dead.

The exhumers were concerned by the lack of attention paid to the dead at the point of their death, and the ways in which the bodies of massacre had been scattered and were either incomplete or comingled with other remains. Alongside the extreme physical violence committed during the massacres of 1990s was the desecration of the dead through the prevention of proper mortuary rites. At first the remains were deliberately left to decay in the open as a propellant for the community to take part in the massacres. Although later on, as the events inside Rwanda caught the attention of international observers, these tactics changed and bodies were rapidly disposed of in shallow graves, toilets and other pits (Des Forges 1999, see for instance, pp. 309, 348 and 515-553). At Cyanika the Survivor-exhumers were keen to tell me that they were the ones who had demanded the mass graves be exhumed, although the equipment and overall management of the event was evidently in the hands of the state. At Nyanza there had been a quiet protest at the proposal that the graves be opened (a point I will return to later) but ultimately the group who took

part in the work did so under a begrudging acceptance of the overseeing official's argument that the crypts had been poorly constructed. At both of the exhumation sites there was concern that the human remains would need some attendance because that intervention had been denied them upon their deaths.

Despite these assertions there was often little about this practice that resembled more traditional or commonplace contemporary mortuary practice. On the whole this was a radically different and 'new' process, something that the exhumers were keen to emphasize. In this section I approach this issue, with reference to the broader intention of mortuary processes. I refer here to the initial treatment of the biological body and the individual in the immediacy of death, and not to a public funerary act which I will discuss in Chapter Seven. My construction of the practice differs, or perhaps emphasizes different elements of the process in an aside to Bloch and Parry (1982), who write of mortuary rites as encompassing both initial mortuary attendance to the body of the dying or dead and the act of burying or otherwise disposing of the corpse.

The manner in which everyday death is managed and commemorated has changed a great deal in Rwanda over the last hundred years, in common with other places across Africa. These changes are in keeping with a radical shift in death rites that have been associated with the arrival of new religions (primarily Christianity), the imposition and end of colonialism, the end, or ongoing transformation of traditional social hierarchies which may have managed these rites, and the introduction of new technologies for managing death (see discussions in Kalusa and Vaughan 2013; Lee and Vaughan 2012; Jindra and Noret 2011)

Although I discuss some basic elements of contemporary mortuary practice in the sections below, this thesis does not detail specific changes to mortuary or funeral rites in Rwanda over the last centuries or decades. There was a great reticence amongst the people I worked with to discuss

contemporary and historical mortuary practice, most probably because our conversations were set in the context of this exhumation work and its very controversial and uncertain management of the dead. In general, the history and contemporary place of less extreme death and burial in Rwanda and the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo is an oddly under-researched topic, particularly given the focus of scholarship on this topic in other areas of Africa.[1] Practical difficulties aside, informants rarely felt it relevant to point out specific differences in the way in which remains were handled now and in the recent or distant past. 'But these are not *normal* bodies, informants would insist, often impatient at the questioning, and it was anyhow 'too late', they could not be buried in the normal way. Despite these assertions there was an important logic to the handling of these remains which built on a bricolage of meaning that surrounds bodies, substance and their place in the world in Rwanda.

Throughout this thesis I have returned to the manner in which recent history and memory in Rwanda is described as being catastrophically damaged by the genocide of 1994. Rwandans will argue that everything changed at this moment, that links between generations were broken, that memory became irreconcilably confused, that there was a great break in the passage of time and history. Given this emphasis on change and new practice, on discontinuity, it is not surprising at all that the exhumation process, although declared to be a kind of mortuary treatment by the exhumers, shifts so dramatically between familiar and unfamiliar practice and tend towards something entirely different. This was a disarticulation of both bodies and a concurrent displacement and fracture of familiar practice that would normally restore disparate remains to coherent personhood.

Bloch and Parry (1982) emphasise the extent to which death, and the process of dying, is always a crisis. They build on previous studies to argue that in an attempt to overcome this crisis mortuary rites most frequently

[1] There is a limited literature published in French which was, for the most part, inaccessible within the confines of this study.

resituate death as the site of regeneration and renewal for the broader community that surrounds the dead, just as the identity of the deceased shifts from that of a once living individual to a 'rebirth' within the eternal and collective sphere of ancestors. The impetus to undertake these exhumations (and the later reinterring of the collective bodies inside memorials) speaks both to this sense of rupture and to the desire to settle or resolve a crisis of identity which normally follows death (according to the authors) but which in this case extends to a much broader social rupture.

As mentioned in Chapters One and Three I sometimes accompanied the rounds of a palliative care nurse, Grace, in an attempt to understand the usual practices that surround dying and death in Rwanda. Part of Grace's duties was to offer guidance and assistance in the management of the body of a patient after death. This work included assistance with the preparation of the body for burial after death. Following the end of life, when the body had finished 'gasping' as Grace put it, relatives of the deceased would carefully wash and dress the deceased in new clothes, usually purchased for the purpose. A public vigil might follow the death, in which family and neighbours would 'greet' the dead, often approaching and touching the body. The vigil would usually take place all night, visitors constantly present in the house, often gathering around a fire in the yard. In the villages this might happen spontaneously after death, but in contemporary Kigali this often involved some advance planning. In a friend's relatively wealthy neighbourhood we arrived home late one night to find all of the surrounding streets blocked with parked cars, the owners attending a vigil at a neighbourhood house, the deceased a member of a well- known high status family.

Despite these careful attentions to mortuary process, the body is generally buried fairly rapidly after death. Grace often helped to arrange funerals for patients, events that she would usually attend. Although I didn't find an opportunity to attend a funeral myself, Grace talked me through the

process and showed me photographs of patients' village funerals. The body is laid out in a wooden coffin, and may remain visible so that those around may look upon the face of the person within. After the funeral service the coffin will be sealed and buried in deep soil. The only further connection with the body is through attendance at the land on which it is buried and not via contact with the remains themselves, there is no tradition of routine second burial in Rwanda and the body is generally not displayed for any length of time after death.[2]

The 'good' death is one in which the process of dying has been mediated in a pre- defined way by the community which surrounds the deceased (Bloch and Parry 1982). Control over the decay of the biological body becomes a particularly important part of this process. As the end of life changes the substance of the body, a concurrent shift in community needs to take place. In an ideal situation, in response to concurrent changes in the decaying body.

A 'good' death in Rwanda, as Grace explained, was also one in which the body was properly attended to during and in the immediate aftermath of death. Laughing, Grace explained that such was this close attendance that older women would prefer to sit with the dying during the final hours of life, pressing the eyelids of the body closed with their hands so that when it entered rigor after death the lids would remain sealed. Grace's assistance was often particularly needed if experienced older community members were not available to assist with mortuary work (not uncommon as Rwanda has a disproportionately young population, both due to the Genocide and the relatively high rate of HIV/AIDs infection and other diseases). As Grace explained, without proper preparation relatives of the deceased might be alarmed by the flow of bodily fluids that would exit the body once death had occurred, and by the appearance of the body once the

[2] Guyer (2009) cites Claudine Vidal's historical study (published in French) in supporting this case.

circulation of blood had ended. The 'bad' death, as was the case with the genocide remains, was one in which the

body lay unattended and these fluids were not controlled, or the violent death, specifically because it involved the spilling of blood, for instance.[3]

In Chapter Four I have discussed the critical significance of cattle and of the milk they produce in establishing and reinforcing kin relations in Rwanda. Fluids of many kinds, including milk are an important 'organizing metaphor' in Rwanda (Taylor 1992, Introduction). As Taylor argues, this is not simply about fluidity but about a dialectic of flow and of blockage, in which substances, vessels and the broader world in which they are set is kept in good form through a careful balance established between the states.

Human bodies are important constituent and conduit in this organisation of broader meaning. Historically, therapy in Rwanda is built around wellbeing as a balancing act between too much and too little flow of bodily fluids. These flows of fluids can be manipulated by others with good or ill intentions. Witchcraft for instance, is traditionally associated with a form of poisoning, the ingestion of substances which disturbs the flow of things through the body, whereas work to overcome fertility issues often centres around mediation of the flow of fluids into and through the body. This emphasis on bodily form has celestial associations, the Royal Court which sat at the centre of the pre-19th Century Kingdom of Rwanda

[3] Open conversation about 'bad' spirits is taboo and most people would refuse to discuss the issue in detail, the government has been very forthright in arguing that such ideas cannot be part of the 'modern' Rwanda. Although Grace, as with other medical staff that I spoke with, insisted that many people, particularly in rural areas, still link spirits to events of ill health and other maladies. Grace argued that several of the families she worked with complained that a deceased patient continued to be a problematic presence after their death. It is interesting that notions of vengeful spirits in Rwanda are attached to the blood spilled and not to the body of the dead, thus these spirits follow the killer and are not associated with the bodies themselves - although informants refused to profess any attachment between these bodies and unhappy spirits, they were happy to insinuate that the killers might be concerned with such things, 'but those things are not for us, these are our people'(Informant, quoted in fieldnotes, Kigali, 2011)

centred around the body of the King, a body understood to be the celestial vessel for *Imaana* (God). It was essential that the King's body not be 'blocked' as he maintained the proper flow of things onto and through the land of Rwanda. In fact his body and the body of the land were as if one and the same. Drought in Rwanda, for instance, suggested a problem with the body of the King.

Taylor speaks of fluid things in Rwanda in Rwanda as an essential part of the 'gift economy'. In doing so, Taylor intends to speak to a system in which substances are used as metaphor, in part because their properties are useful. These are the 'raw materials from which a '"science of the concrete" embodying this logic is edified' (Taylor 1992, 9).

Although Taylor's focus is on the ways in which the 'flow/blockage dialectic' functions as an organising metaphor for the world, he does so through an emphasis on the ways in which it matters that these are actual substances being managed. Fluids both signify and are indicators of meaning. This is 'the science of the concrete' which Lévi Strauss intends. Taylor examines flow as a way of revealing the unconscious 'patterns' underlying Rwandan structures of meaning but his observations of the nature of substances in flow also relate importantly to my discussion about the interruption and significances of substance in and of itself. Here is the critical paragraph:

> My claim is that one finds this patterning in areas of representation that best express the qualities of diffuseness and motion - in things that flow. Liquids are the clearest expression of this; they embody the amorphousness that Smith speaks of. You cannot sculpt them, you cannot depict them as they are. They are neither solid nor ethereal, but instead move between realms, between tangibility and intangibility, between being and nonbeing. You cannot grasp them, yet they can be contained and directed. You can acquire them but their power lies as much in their capacity to be given away as in their appropriation, in their capacity to transform social relations, and in their capacity to mediate between disparate realms of being (Taylor 1992, 24)

Flow/blockage dialectic in this context is not just about the maintenance of units of human and nonhuman things in Rwanda, it is broadly speaking, about the flow of substances, out of which a work of things emerges through acts of co-constitution. Here the similarities with Bennett's ideas are perhaps obvious, it is in assemblage, in the stabilisation of substances in flow that entities, both human and non-human emerge.

A concern with the problematic of the boundedness of bodies is common across Eastern and Southern Africa (Moore 1999; Langwick 2011; Jacobson-Widding 1991; Mabilia 2005). Niehaus's work on the problematic lack of containment exemplified by the body of HIV/AIDs patients is a pertinent example. The body in excess of 'flow', becomes a source of pollution akin to the decaying corpse, the dying become ostracized as the 'living dead'. This in comparison to the bones of the 'cool' corpse, which is not so dangerous due to its lack of active exchange between the internal and external surface of the body. Niehaus describes the rigorous washing which the corpse is subjected to, usually at the hands of a family member at least risk of harm from residual fluid (2007, 2013).

These practices bear striking resemblance to mortuary rites and fears of pollution from bodies in Rwanda. As Grace's notes on mortuary ritual indicate, there is a drive to mediate the flow of substance through entry and exit points after death (although the sealing of the eyes marks a particularly complex point of access between the inner and outer body and the world beyond). The body in death is sealed and contained, not a vessel through which liquids enter and exit, thus the body after death is problematic as bodily substances may flow freely from it, or simply pool problematically in stasis where they would be in flow within a living body. As Taylor (1992, 10) points out the properly dead body is one in which the dead are 'blocked' 'empty', they no longer contain or mediate the 'flow' of life within them. Although I have pointed out that the exhumation or display of bodies after death in Rwanda is not part of commonplace practice, the king's body was historically an exception to this practice.

According to historical record, upon the death of the king his body was kept in a hut on one side of Rwanda whilst his living replacement resided in the other half of Rwanda. The two bodies, one living one dead, ruled in dual. Yet the dead body was not retained in a fluid state but was carefully dried and mummified, and made accessible to just a few special attendants (Taylor 1992, 42- 43)

Not only are the bodies contained within the mass graves believed to have suffered the worst kind of death, one in which there had been almost none of the usual mortuary practice, but once the graves are opened what is revealed is almost or entirely incoherent. Rather than a corpse, what the exhumers are presented with is a comingled mass of substance, some of which is easy to differentiate (clothing, possessions, skulls) and some of which is not clear at all, but simply a difficult and often distressing mass. The bodies are almost all flow, with no containment or boundary at all. Thus what takes place at the exhumations is a delicate manipulation of substance so that bodies begin to emerge. It is in a sense an inversion of the usual mortuary and funerary process. The work begins rather than ends with a body submerged in soil.

What Julia refers to in the initial section of this chapter is the exhumer's aim that the remains would become persons. The work of the exhumers therefore, is not just to separate out human substance from the graves but to create categories of discrete things and objects in amongst the mass of exhumed substances. The exhumers also intend that this thing will emerge as a dead body, through a literal smoothing over of borders, a creation of a separation between the internal and the external structure of the thing, through intervention into and mediation of the unbounded body in flow.

The skulls that the exhumers are so keen to handle and the satisfaction that is expressed in finding a 'good' skull was satisfaction at the tangible revealing of the presence of a body. A 'face' could be held up to one's own

face, eye sockets through which a person can potentially see, a mouth through which words could be spoken. A skull can be given a place in the everyday order of things, it can be related to in a way that a fragment of bone, or even a scapula is not.

In the anxiety associated with this act and the dedication given over to this, it is possible to expand upon how this process was more than a method of making indeterminate exhumed stuff meaningful. It was also an act which aimed to produce those things as persons, or fragments thereof. The hard work that was dedicated to locating human remains amongst the mass of exhumed materials extended beyond an acknowledgement of recognizable elements of the body. In the act of recovering and separating out the remains - in the tedious and endless rinsing and sifting, in the hard work of scrubbing the surface of the bone with foamy water and in the careful smoothing over of its surface once the foam is rinsed away - in the process itself the presence of a person, and more specifically, of dead kin, also became implicit.

This kind of handling is similar to that cited by Julie Livingston in her observation of the treatment of patients in Botswana (Livingston 2008). Sophia elbows me in the ribs while she is removing soil from a jaw “look!’ she giggles, holding up the skull and wiggling the toothbrush “I am cleaning his teeth!”.

There is also however a subtle differentiation in the inflection of the relationship between the exhumers who regard these remains as kin, and between the state and the bones’ more abstracted relationship. To pick up the human remains and handle them in the way that the exhumers do is to temporarily sate a sense of uncertainty that is necessarily attached to human remains (as I have discussed in the introduction). At the moment that Sophia runs her toothbrush over the teeth and suggests that she is cleaning a person’s teeth, and when the exhumer holds the face of a skull up to their own face, these are moments in which some kind of

certainty is established, in which the human remains, as a 'things' are given the most stability.

This element of careful handling becomes the critical determinant between the actions of the state and that of the exhumers. This need to attend to the bodies of the dead, to be involved in their handling again became part of a small act of rebellion against the impositions of the state upon the exhumation work. Following advice offered by "specialists"[4] for example, the overseeing officials had provided boxes of clinical gloves and face masks to the teams at each site. Each person dutifully took a pair of gloves at the beginning of the day. A few hours into the work most of the gloves had broken, several people immediately cut off the fingers in order to better grip the remains and those who were wearing them properly found an innovative method for putting them on easily - by dunking the glove into the water in which the exhumation matter was soaking and pushing their hand into the water filled plastic. Some refused to wear them at all "why would I be afraid to touch those bodies?" said Ada, "those are my people".

In some senses this lack of attention to the particular work of the exhumers to make these bodies persons seemed to be due to a lack of understanding on the part of officials and thus presumably of the state. Therefore, for example, as the work at Cyanika progressed the officials overseeing the work became jittery. There was a set deadline for this process because the First Lady, Janet Kagame, was due to inaugurate the completed memorial, within which the bones would be interred, on a specific date. This had required months and months of planning and would be a national event. But the size of the mass graves and the painstaking work of the exhumer- survivors meant that the process of separating human remains from the exhumed mass was taking too long. The solution,

[4] The presence of these "specialists" and when or where they had been involved was difficult to establish. People at the sites at which I worked were very vague about their involvement - I have discussed this in Chapters Four and Eight.

the officials decided, was the compulsory recruitment of whole communities of people from the surrounding areas under the national community service scheme called *umuganda*. These people were not genocide survivors, at least not publically declared, but included a mixture of newcomers to the area post-genocide and presumably Hutu people. There were a disproportionately large number of men amongst this group, although men had not been absent from the core group of exhumers who were washing the remains, they tended to be less representative both because there simply were more women 'survivors' of the genocide violence (women were frequently raped and not killed) and because men were not free to come to the sites as they were more likely to be paid labourers elsewhere. The atmosphere at the sites on the days that these people came to take part in the work was incredibly tense. The survivor-exhumers were extremely unhappy, even angry with the recruitment of these people. Their sour mood, matched both those of the 'volunteers'. These groups of people were also sat outside in the hot sun around tarpaulin pools that offered no shade at all (this is considered to be an extremely rude gesture in Rwandan custom). They whispered amongst themselves and shot steely glances in the direction of the canopies, as the survivor-exhumers did the same. Some were quite openly careless or lazy in their washing of the remains. In the end the whole operation was completely pointless. As as soon as these people had put aside their washed items, the exhumer-survivors snatched away the bones and washed them all over again.[5]

This disconnect between the state's intentions for the remains and that of the survivor-exhumers continued similarly at the Nyanza exhumation sites. Once the bones had been removed from the mass grave sites and separated

[5] This state official's organisation of this process was either breathtakingly ill-conceived or deliberately pointed. Not only was the animosity between these groups of people easy to predict but historically exactly the same process had been carried out by the extremist Habyarimana government in the mid-1990s. In this case local officials recruited Hutu in exactly the same manner through the *umuganda* scheme, in order to gather up and move the bodies of murdered Tutsi into the mass graves.

into piles they were gathered together in great mounds of remains and placed in collective on tarpaulins in the community hall which sat at the top of the memorial site. The exhumers then spent several days moving these remains into collective coffins (as I have discussed in the introduction, although the remains in the crypts were often accessible, they were not always visible). But this process was not simple. The officials tried to impress upon the exhumers the need to place the bones into the coffins in the most efficient way to conserve space. For instance, by packing all of the leg bones together in one place. The survivor-exhumers quietly ignored the officials' protests however, and steadfastly organised the bones into an arrangement synonymous with the body of a kind of collective person, one in which a number of skulls were placed at the 'head' of the coffin, the long limbs of the arms and legs were laid lengthways along the edges, and the mixture of vertebrae and other small bones were smoothed into dense mass in the middle.

The Body and the State

One of the ways in which the survivors were not able to find resolution speaks to the broader purpose of the state in obtaining these remains as evidence of 'violence' specifically.

The graves also yielded bodies that were paradoxically frustrating precisely because they were less decayed. The flesh of some of the corpses were partially preserved by the heat and the pressure of thousands of decomposing bodies tightly packed together. These fleshy remains were problematic for the survivor-exhumers in a way that bones were not. The survivors become bound to and reliant on the state in the handling of these remnants, and the state finds particular utility in these kinds of remains in the pursuit of its own project of evidencing the violence committed during the genocide (as I discuss in Chapter Two).

Soft tissue was handled by the exhumers in very particular ways depending on its mass and constitution. Sometimes remnants remained

attached to bone or were caught in amongst the exhumed matter. An empty washing-powder container was kept tucked underneath the benches and passed hand to hand when needed. Bits of soft decay were deposited into this in one collective lump. Marie helped me identify the origins of the stringy glutinous substance which clung to some of the bones, pinching the muscle in my arm by way of explanation. Or pointing to the lumps of brain matter which sometimes floated to the surface of the buckets when the skulls were submerged - "*ubwonko*" (brain) - she said, rapping her knuckle on her head.

In comparison to the bones, this composite of flesh did not receive additional treatment by the survivor-exhumers. It was not possible to wash the surface in the manner of bone. At least the bucket prevented the flesh from further escaping or dissolving into the surrounding space, except when the fitted plastic lid was removed which would explode a choking waft of decay into the face of the person with the misfortune to open it. Most people would turn their face away to peel the lid back, the only time members of the group routinely recoiled in reaction to the remains.

Occasionally a substantial amount of brain matter would be contained within the skulls that were lifted from the piles of exhumed materials. In these cases the bones would be handed over to the site coordinator and placed alongside other fleshy lumps and mummified corpses which were laid out on tarpaulin in the dark brick sheds that surrounded the tarpaulin shelter.

Decaying flesh does not lend itself to control in the way that bones do. It remains alarming in its continued entanglement with other things, always seeming to be in some state of "disappearing" (*kurigita*), haunting in its continuing attachment with a partially absent body and yet also 'alive' in a persistent and ongoing state of animation that is entirely separate from the emerging sense of persons. Actual fleshy remains are incredibly

problematic - they look much more like persons than bones, they retain skin and sometimes echo fleshy facial features - but they are 'alive' in the 'wrong' way - they are active in a horrifying fashion, in a manner in which bones are not (although they have their own kind of 'felt presence' it is not of the same kind).

Furthermore, although soft flesh evidently is part of the human body and is identified as such by the exhumers it is also a direct antithesis to the familiar body. At the most basic level, unlike the ideal Rwandan body, which is understood to be a controlled and contained conduit, a vessel which a moderate flow of bodily substance flows through the body in this case are literally all flow, there is no containment, no moderation. The decaying flesh is indiscriminate from the environment around it.
Thus to walk under the canopy where the work is taking place is to breathe in the stench of decaying flesh so that it seems as if this substance is in constant dissipation.

Earlier I described the emergence of the bodies from the graves as being a work of creating discrete meaningful things from an otherwise an amorphous exhumed mass. The most immediate problem with the flesh covered remains was that they could not be clearly separated by the exhumers from their embedding in the graves. The sticky flesh is not separate from the environment around it and in some ways it seemed as though its removal from the graves had actually intensified that presence. Inside the dark stone sheds in which these remains were stored the air was heavy with moisture from the impending rains, but there was no breeze. The decaying remains literally hung heavy in the air. So strong was the smell that the survivors who would tiptoe around the edges of the remains to peer at the bodies would often clasp material over their nose and mouth, in direct contrast to the determined absence of bodily barriers which characterized the handling of the remains.

It was not just the material dispersion of these remains which was

problematic but their appearance. They looked in-between two states. Not quite the satisfactorily person-like form of bones, and not quite soil substrate either. The recovered corpses were often lumps of bodies, rather than whole figures. Look at the remnant one way and a distorted bodily feature could be distinguished, look at it the other way and it was an off-white lump of soil again. This was a state that the survivors were not able to control, soft flesh can never fully emerge and be separated from other things in the way that seemed possible with bone. The flesh could not be held in a hand and cleansed or polished in the way that the survivor-exhumers work to define the surface of bone.

The only solution was to hand these remains over to the state officials who would arrange to pour chemicals on them and thus limit further decay. As discussed in Chapter Three, flesh covered corpses have a very significant place in the state's memorial project and they do so without the intervention of the survivors who are unable to establish any sort of association with the remains. In an unfortunate symbolic establishing of that division the remains were also locked into these sheds at night and a security guard armed with a rifle was seated at the door.

The state referred to these bodies as 'disappearing', using the term '*gushiba*', which also means 'to flow' or 'to lose meaning'. This was used as part of the argument to convince the genocide survivors that they should agree to exhume the bodies from the graves at Nyanza. Reticence was expressed because the survivors felt that the bodies had already been buried once and that this therefore constituted an exhumation of contained bodies. This was vehemently expressed in the case of those people who had not only buried the bodies rapidly immediately after their death, but for those people who had already exhumed the bodies once from the mass graves at the Parliament buildings on the other side of the city. These disarticulated, washed and neatly stacked bones were piled floor to ceiling of the fourth crypt at the back of the exhumation site.

As I will return to discuss in Chapter Seven, once the remains are placed back on the shelves of the memorials and become visible, and yet out of the hands of the exhumers, this uncertainty, this 'excess' of meaning, becomes increasingly problematic. It is this problem that the state harnesses. The state uses the violation of the remains, conceived of as exactly that thing 'in flow', thus the attenuation of that status is less useful and relevant for that purpose. Taylor (1999) writes on the ways in which violence could be understood in terms of a removal of the 'blocked' Tutsi body from Rwanda. Here again, the issue of substance becomes more than just a symbolic tool.

Ultimately, despite its utility, neither the state nor the exhumers were able to contain the uncertainty that surrounded the remains completely. This concern that not all of the remains of the dead had been obtained, the sense that something was missing manifested in particular ways.

The concern that every remnant of the remains be given appropriate attention is manifest in the significant anxiety that all of the fragments of the bodies be recovered from the graves. This required considerable effort and no small amount of innovation on the part of the exhumers. This included a process of rinsing soil through the fabric of empty charcoal sacks in order to sieve out even the smallest remnants of the body. We spent a surreal series of days hunched over a tiny stool picking out buttons, teeth and slithers of bone from a mass of grave soil. Ultimately the exhumers were so concerned that the bodies might remain concealed under soil at the base of the sites that they continued to dig into the thick impacted clay underneath the soft soil of the graves, only ceasing when the diggers had reached the water table and were unable to prevent the base of the sites from flooding.

It is exactly this captivating form of affect which makes the collectives of bones so affecting. In the sense of both presence and absence of persons.

Indeed, although exhumers rarely expressed upset in the face of the work at the exhumations a number of people were badly affected by the presence of the remains in the hall at the end of the exhumation process at Nyanza. Two of the women who had been a stalwart presence throughout the exhumation process were escorted from the hall in tears during the process of placing the bones into the coffins. And the young man who had been so badly effected by 'trauma' as described in Chapter Four was so hypnotised by the piles of bones that he refused to leave the hall at the end of the evening and Ada reported spending several hours persuading him to go home. One afternoon I also visited the hall alone whilst I waited for a meeting with the official. The experience was quite overwhelming. In the confrontation of the hall and its contents, there was sudden sense of the presence of persons, of somehow very familiar people.

Exhumed remains at Nyanza, author's own photograph, 2012

Conclusions

As this thesis argues, the exhumers conflate the need to place the human remains inside the memorials with the national memorialization process. However, their purpose in attending to these processes does not carry quite the same, or quite the same weight of purpose as that of the RPF.

For the exhumers the work here is in both generating and consolidating a collective identity that has emerged in the wake of the genocide and recent political shifts (albeit with roots in historical and established identities). For the state, the work is more complex, it also a harnessing of materials which best articulate the horror of violence - for the state this is exactly those fleshy, decaying remains which the exhumer-survivors find most problematic.

Meticulous and intense care and dedication, and an immense amount of personal energy was put into this work. The frustration and muted sadness that surrounded these remains often gave way to a sense of satisfaction as people placed the cleaned and clearly demarcated bone on the tarpaulins at the end of the process.

In Chapter Seven I discuss the moments in which a national commemorative event, also a funeral service for the remains, serves to continue this attempt to restore ‘dignity’ or personhood to the exhumed human remains. These attempts must manage the inevitable absence of the whole or complete person, or the lack of clarity that surround their satisfactory emergence as dead persons following the service.

At Nyanza, this discarding or denial of individuated identity was even more profound for in amongst these graves were not just bones, but skeletal remains that almost perfectly preserved in-situ in the clothing in which they had been buried. Surrounding, and entangled with the bodies were personal possessions, a narrative snapshot often of the moments just

before death, artefacts that might included the names and photographs of the individuals printed on the identity cards which were located in the pockets of the clothes. All of these things were methodically separated from the skeletal remains, which were disarticulated, washed, and amassed into a collective. In this act, and in many that followed, this intention marked the survivor-exhumers desires for, and handling of these exhumations, and the things within, as a step aside from the intentions of the state. Although the survivors proclaimed a commitment to the state's project to produce or preserve these exhumed things as "proof" of genocide, this commitment was often not evidenced or completely followed-through in the work that was undertaken at the sites. It would have been difficult, as I had often tried to discuss with state officials, for the two intentions (to "bury the dead with dignity" and "preserve proof of genocide") to be achieved concurrently.

Yet, the remains are powerful and distinctive things not simply because it is possible for them to resemble bodies but because of the ambiguity that is attached to that resemblance or existence. Part of the significance of the remains for the exhumers is that they retain a powerful affecting capacity even when their characteristics as discrete subjects are strewn away. Despite all of the care, all of the labour, and all of the effort in smoothing out, cleansing and consolidating the bones in an effort to establish the shape of familiar persons, this body cannot be too familiar, too individuated. There was a striking tension between drawing out and retaining persons from the jumble of remains, and yet a distancing and disarticulating of individuals. When the bones are laid out on the tarpaulins there is no effort to make these things singular bodies instead they are incorporated into a vast collective of remains. There is no effort to inscribe even tentative individual identity upon the remains during the exhumation work itself. Although personhood is insinuated and perhaps gender and age becomes speculative, remains are never attributed with a name. Nobody imagines that a particular set of remains might be this or that person

(unless in very singular and exceptional circumstances which I discuss elsewhere). Nobody attempts to establish or remember, for example, that the false leg - an unusual appearance - belongs to a particular person in the neighbourhood that it is very possible the exhumers would remember.

Chapter Six: Spectres of the Dead[1]

Introduction

To the left of the crypts at Nyanza work takes place to untangle the remains from their wrappings. We stand on a large square of tarpaulin with our current lot of exhumed bodies stacked in a loose pile in the middle, a tangled mess of bone, clothing, funeral shrouds, and wood fragments. Work is methodical. The team encircle the bodies and pick away at the edges of the stack of corpses, slowly they will work their way in to the middle. Clothes to one side, bones to the other, personal possessions and identity cards placed in a cardboard box which is tucked away under a chair. The bones that most obviously protrude from the pile are removed first. The long bones of the arms and legs are tugged away. The skulls, which are relatively heavy, are scattered around the outside of the pile and are scooped up and into the bowls at our feet in which the disentangled bones are placed, ready to be moved on to a group that will wash them of soft decay and soil.

The process is unnervingly like undressing a living person. Leg bones are still inside trousers, ribs sit inside the chest of woolen jumpers, hooked into the knit of the material. Personal possessions are knotted in between all of the clothing … here a tiny knitted orange jumper … there a tube of toothpaste and toothbrush neatly tucked into the pocket of a tweed-print jacket … a school exercise book rolled up and pushed into the pocket of child's shorts … a glass jar in a plastic shopping bag – an unidentifiable liquid sloshing around in the bottom … these items are dug out of pockets filled with the shells of insects, whispery fragments - falling out of the hems of jackets and trousers and pressed into the fabric of clothes. The beetles fill the insides of socks, otherwise weighed down with the small bones of the toe and heel. We turn the socks inside-out, peeling out the bones. When the socks are

[1] Elements of the ethnography and discussion in this chapter were included in a paper I published in 2015. See bibliography for full details (Major 2015)

first handled it feels as though a whole fleshy foot is contained; shades of insects have filled the space where the soft tissue would be. It is as if the people have been transformed into insects, shed their skin, and flown away leaving the ghosts of the shape they once were.

The team works hard. On a good day when we are not too tired the group can unpack a very large pile in just a few hours. When everything is finished all that is left is a neat pile of fine dust in the center of the mat.

Amongst the exhumers at Nyanza were Eda and her sister May. We have worked together untangling bodies at the tarpaulin for a number of days. Both sisters are almost silent, in stark contrast to the constant conversation around us, and Jane, who manages a stream of constant and almost deafening gossip.

Eda looks up and smiles at me during our work. We share a task that is unofficially our own – once all of the substantial remains are removed we take the edges of the thick tarpaulin and lift them up each in turn, shaking and sliding the soft earth into the middle. Eda takes great care over this task, and I can understand the salve in the finality – a small dark heap of soil alone in the middle of the bright orange tarpaulin.

The final three tarpaulins that we work through today are a jumble of bones wrapped tightly in the knots of decayed woolen blankets. The group is wearily shifting through the piles. We have been here for long hours and our work is becoming laboured. May grapples with a bone at the edge of her pile, eventually ripping the wool to extract it. This bone is unusual, a long thin metal rod implanted into the side. May leans forward to inspect the metal, her hand pressed to her stomach. It is the first time I have seen anyone look afraid. Now lots of people are peering over. The sisters are whispering to each other. Eda pushes close to May to look at the bone on the ground. One of the university students stands up from her own task and leans in to say

quietly:

"It is her [their] brother, Matthew."

Eda and May have put the bone with the rest of the recovered remains, in the bucket on one side. For a while I think they will continue working. May is wiping tears with her hand whilst picking through the rubble with the other. Nobody approaches them, nobody stops working, although a subdued hush falls over the group.

Eventually Eda sits on one of the plastic chairs at the side of the tarpaulin and covers her face with the headscarf that has been wrapped around her hair. After some time, she brushes off her skirt and walks around to the enormous pile of clothes that we have removed from the corpse bundles and which are now dumped at the side of the site (these, unlike the bones, are not afforded any further attention). Talking softly to those sitting nearby, describing a shirt and trousers, she picks through the clothes that have recently been put on the pile and squints at a few a pieces, as if they are something, but then puts them back, perhaps nothing in the end. Then, as if the incident had not happened, the girls go back to their work at the tarpaulins. The brother's bones are carried off and disappear into the piles of other remains held in the washing up bowls.

EDITED FROM FIELDNOTES, JUNE 2011

The exhumation work aims to isolate remains of dead bodies and fragments of individual corpses, from the mass of exhumed substances. In a contrast to the more common intentions of mass grave exhumation the work does not ultimately (re)inscribe the recovered remains with traces of an individual life. Instead, almost always, the bones and flesh are amassed into a de-individualised collective. As Chapter Five argues, this is not just a symbolic act of reorganising the once-living, it is – as elderly Rwandan women hold closed the eyes of the 'gasping' dying to seal the lids in post-

mortis rigor – a very literal negotiation and manipulation of human substances and their place and constitution in the world.

In most cases, any element of an individual life that could not immediately be rendered less visible through the transformative work of washing and disarticulating the bones and flesh was treated with relative indifference by the exhumers, aided perhaps more so at Cyanika than at Nyanza by the extremely fragmented and decayed remains.

In the extract above however, the two women suddenly recognise what they believe to be the body of their brother. There is a moment in which overwhelming emotion interrupts the normally ordered and composed work. This incident is sparked by materials which cannot, at least initially, be disentangled from a private and personal bereavement. Despite their reaction the young women and the accompanying exhumers do not dwell on this event; almost immediately May gathers up the remains of her brother and hands them to the group who are washing bones, here they are dropped into a bowl with the other human remains. Eda briefly picks over the surface of the vast pile of clothes that we have removed from the graves looking for something familiar (she later tells me that she had been with Matthew on the day of his death) but this is rapidly abandoned. Fifteen minutes later the entire group has returned to their tasks, albeit under the aegis of a sombre hush. May cries quietly whilst picking over the pile of corpses that we are disarticulating. This scene emphasises the odd juxtaposition between the marginalization of identifiable traces of individual dead persons, and events such as these in which a material that cannot be distanced from those once-living individuals draws out otherwise private emotions of grief.

The corporeal remains of victims of genocide and conflict matter hugely to Rwandans. Many expend great anxiety and resources in locating, managing and reorganising these bodies. Yet alongside this draw towards the remains of the dead there is divided opinion over how these remains should be handled, particularly where they should ultimately be located. Across the

broad spectrum of Rwandans the inclusion of victims' remains in state memorials, and especially in their current variation of forms – disarticulated, collective, anonymous, sometimes visible – is an extremely controversial and emotive issue. Yet bodies continue to be moved into these sites and with little public debate accompanying that work. In this chapter I address this issue, first examining the state pressure upon Rwandans to carry out the work of memorialising the remains. I also argue that there is often a pragmatic reasoning behind the inclusion of the remains in the memorials, particularly for the genocide Survivors I worked alongside. The fragmented and incoherent nature of the remains removed from the mass graves, the frustrations and grief caused by missing bodies, and the material remnants and mementos of the individual dead that are available are catastrophically entangled with violence and rupture. Managing the tangible remnants of that violence or those violated persons, and locating a meaningful place and constitution for and of the dead is an ongoing struggle for genocide Survivors.

The exhumation work at the mass graves reveals these struggles to settle the dead in their acute form. To offer 'dignity' to the dead that were located in the mass graves under exhumation was a pervasive and vocal concern for the survivor-exhumers. Although all of the mortuary and commemorative work discussed in this thesis might be part of an attempt to restore 'dignity' to the dead, this was not an act that would result in the restitution of a 'good' death. The exhumers frequently reminded me during our conversations that the bodies of the people we worked with were not 'normal'. The exceptional status of the human remains was a derivative of their exceptional death. Familiar mortuary and funeral practices could no longer apply to these people. It was "too late" for these remains.

The critical point that I introduce in the closing section of this chapter is that the deceased occupy a spectral and unsettled state. I argue that the exceptional treatment of these corpses set within broader and drastic shifts

in their identity, amongst other things, has rendered the dead a liminal subject. Lives lost are not yet returned as 'settled' dead. This speaks importantly both to the shifting of personal and political identities that I discuss in Chapter Four, to the problematic and productive nature of substances that I discuss in Chapter Five, and to the uncertainty that surrounded the memorial bones which I will discuss in Chapter Seven.

Troubling Remains

People killed during the genocide massacres and accompanying violence were suddenly and violently destroyed, disappeared or fragmented. Many of those who survived the violence are still desperately searching for the bodily remains of the dead. Almost all of the informants for this research were engaged in some form of either actively searching for, or continual rumination, on the location of missing relatives. Missing people, presumed dead, were a persistent preoccupation for many of the informants for this research. Many spoke about missing relatives and remarked bitterly that their bodies are likely dumped in pit latrines or lying in shallow unmarked graves. Eve asked if me if I would "give her a cow" in order to exhume the body of her brother whose remains she believed lay somewhere on the hillside on the outskirts of the village.[2]

One day, for instance, I meet with Robert at a hotel bar in Kigali. We were to discuss the loss of his family during the genocide, and he had pressed for this meeting despite ill health leading to its cancellation several times. When we sat down to speak however he was distracted. It was April, the national official month of mourning for the genocide dead, and it is one of the busiest weeks for state organised memorialisation activities, which include gatherings at mass grave sites and memorials, services and performances at local and national stadium, street parades and almost blanket coverage of the event and associated material on both radio and television. Many people suffer from 'trauma' during this time. He said his

[2] I have discussed the significance of cows for funeral practice in Chapter Four. In this context though the request for a cow was a more polite way of asking for money.

friends look out for each other, watching in case someone becomes unwell. The behaviour of one of his friends had been a cause for concern. The young man had been told by a 'genocide perpetrator' that the bodies of his parents had been dumped in a swimming pool in Kigali. But the perpetrator had not told him which pool and it was an ongoing project was to locate it. This was an immense task, perhaps impossible. Many of the conflict dead dumped in pools, pit latrines and other areas had already been removed and taken to memorial sites or buried elsewhere.

The need to have some tangible confirmation or connection with the human remains of the dead was so important that some had gone to extreme lengths to locate human remains. Johan had been told that the body of his wife was dumped into the river near his house. He and other families had recently travelled to the mass grave sites in Uganda, a trip organised by the government and local NGOs. As he told his story, his dejection was obvious, he had thought it might be possible to locate his wife's body but when he reached the memorial site he viewed with dismay the bare ground that I had also witnessed, the scrub covering the mass grave pit. There was no hope of viewing the bodies beneath. I was taken aback that Johan would have held onto such hope. In his story he described the remains, as many others did, as if his wife's body was a tangible thing, an object in stasis, lying somewhere in a grave and recoverable. This was difficult to understand – photographs and stories of the massive number of bodies that were disposed in this way, and of the extensive decay and fragmentation of the remains when they were recovered from Lake Victoria were in frequent circulation in Rwanda, and it was more than fifteen years after the remains had been buried.

Given the persistence and energy that many people invested in locating remains, and the number of people still searching for missing relatives (a search made all the more difficult by the en masse disarticulation and imposition of anonymity at the mass graves) the commitment to disarticulation that follows their removal from the graves is important to

unravel. Not least because not all of the disarticulated remains reach their resting place in the memorials in the same way: not all are already fragmented and separate from personal possessions when they are removed from the mass graves and not all are initially recovered from mass graves – some are found in shallow burial as individuals, some are deliberately removed from what had been a careful and ceremonious burial, placed there with ritual as appropriate to the usual form of Rwandan burial.[3]

The state places great pressure on Survivors to take part in this work. The RPF has particular reasons for its wish to pursue the memorialisation of the bones and their various forms of accessibility and display. This reasoning relates directly to the form that Genocide history must take in order to sit in synergy with state action. There is a strong impetus to present the bones in this way as particularly affecting imageries of mass violence, and furthermore as publically accessible 'evidence' that these actions have taken place (as I have discussed in Chapter Two). The RPF has pursued this policy fastidiously. One of the key tasks of the new 'Officials of Memory and Conservation' was to persuade families who had buried the remains of Survivors in private family plots to exhume and move the bodies to the memorial sites. When I asked Officials what would happen if the family did not wish to move the bodies I was told that this was often the case but it was the task of the Officials to visit the family repeatedly and 'nudge' them in the direction of moving the remains. I was assured that the family was given time to make a decision themselves, but that most families eventually agreed.[4] The production of the remains in this way, and their separation from individual identity assists in the flattening and even the concealment of identities, which is not conducive with the state's narrative of the past, or indeed its wish for identities in the present. There

[3] It was extremely difficult to find out more about decisions to exhume from family burial at the same time as my work at the mass grave sites. The decision to exhume from family burial was one of the most controversial and contentious issues in this activity. I have mentioned the sensitivities of certain areas of research in Chapter Three.

[4] Interview, Official of Memory and Conservation, 2012

have been accusations that the RPF has deliberately taken part in this work in order to conceal the bodies of people killed by its own soldiers during and in the aftermath of the genocide. Even aside from any deliberate concealment the remains removed from mass graves in Rwanda simply must also include those of Hutu victims, and of Tutsi killed in circumstances other than genocide. The conflict was too messy and lengthy for this not to be the case.

It would not have been possible for the Survivors to openly critique the RPF's organisation of these activities. As I have pointed out in Chapter Four, informants' wellbeing depended on continued close and productive association with the state and as with many Rwandans -they were careful to avoid public conversation which could be interpreted as criticism of the RPF and its activities. Erin Jesse (2010), for instance, has pointed out that it is incredibly difficult for Rwandans to speak openly about their wishes in relation to burial, and that commitment to the display of disarticulated remains across the broad spectrum of Rwandans is chequered. This echoes Rwandan opinion garnered by, for example, Buckley-Zistal (2006, 138) and the concerns of the characters in Diop's semi-fictionalised 'Murambi: the book of bones' (Diop 2006).

This situation is complicated by the fact that there appears to be a hierarchy in place in terms of who is able to memorialise bones as individuals, and whose relatives will be committed to collective burial in amongst the mass of bones.

Robert, for instance, had met with me to discuss his 'testimony', the story of the death of his family during the genocide. Robert had been a small child when the genocide occurred. His house was on the outskirts of Kigali near the thick marsh that runs alongside the Nyabarongo River. When the genocidaires came to attack his family he had managed to run away into the thick rushes that line the river bank. The bodies of his family had been missing until very recently

when their location was revealed at the trial of an alleged killer. His friends had returned with him to exhume the remains and they were now interred in Nyamata genocide memorial on the outskirts of Kigali (the memorial I describe in the introduction). Robert was pleased to hear that I had visited the sites. If I go again he asked that I look for the coffin and greet his parents.

Robert's parents were, unusually, not placed amongst the bones of the anonymous dead. When I visited the memorial buildings it appeared as though they had been stored together in one coffin. I admired the large wooden box draped with purple shroud and lace overlay. Next to this was a framed photograph of Robert's parents.

Robert was very much a member of the elite amongst genocide Survivors, and at that time he held the highest office in the influential national student organisation for genocide survivors. Perhaps this is the reason that the remains were not automatically distributed amongst the other bones. Quite possibly this is guided by access to the money and resources to conduct careful exhumation of the remains, and to pay for a collective coffin, but it also suggests a more complex entanglement with the vagaries of status and influence which allows space to be made available in the memorials for some discrete biographically-named remains. This was also the case with the body of the priest and his family who were exhumed from the grounds of the church at Cyanika, as discussed in the previous chapter.

There are Tutsi whose relatives were killed during the genocide but who do not want the bodies of these people to be included within the memorials. It may be very difficult to resist the imposition of the state in this regard, not to mention any pressure from other Survivors. There are rumours that bodies are smuggled over the border of the country, or that remains are secretly buried in order to avoid the attentions of Officials (pers' comms, 2012, 2013, 2014). There were also, sometimes, mutterings of discomfort with the exhumations amongst the Survivors themselves. At the end of the

exhumation work at Cyanika, June brought the body of her grandfather to the memorial. The man had been killed before the 1994 genocide in an act of violence inspired by the pre-genocide government's hate campaigns against the Tutsi. Her grandfather had received 'traditional' burial and was carefully wrapped in shrouds. When I viewed the body, it was laid out next to the disarticulated remnants of corpses on which I had been working. June was unwilling to discuss the exhumation of the body and what would happen to the remains. After the exhumation and interment had been completed I search for the body of June's grandfather, but I did not find it again, at least not articulated, amongst the remains that were placed inside the memorial.

There are other factors motivating Survivors to take part in this work. In many ways these are indicative of an implicit pressure which originates from broader state activity, but these are also influences deeply bound to the pragmatics that emerge in the wake of a conflict such as this. In a recently published paper I have argued that the work at the mass graves sites in particular can be compared and contrasted to that of exhuming and identifying the victims of the Spanish Civil War. In Spain, the exhumations use techniques of 'scientific identification' which: 'employ[s] the anatomical information gleaned from skeletal structures, as well as materials that surround the corpses, such as clothing, shoes and personal effects, and compares these with information about the appearance and anatomy of the deceased drawn from family and local community. Alongside this, Renshaw notes, runs a process of 'locally meaningful conceptualizations of identity' (Renshaw 2010, 454).

This process consists of, for example, the generation and circulation of conversation about the unique personal traits of particular dead people in life. This might include moments in which personal items and skeletal structure were displayed and discussed: a process that Renshaw argues 'renders the reality of their pre-death existence a tangible reality, allowing them to be more readily imagined as they were in life' (Renshaw 2010,

457). These processes, this 'reiterating of familial bones with the dead, reinserting them in social networks', allows 'affective identification' to be achieved. Renshaw describes this as a kind of 'gathering-in'.

In Rwanda, this kind of 'gathering-in' is not attempted. This is both because the state makes no attempt to instigate this activity, and because - I argue - such attempts would carry risk and difficulty of an entirely different form to that of Spain. The survivor-exhumers were often afraid of their neighbours, and resentful towards them as people who they held responsible for the deaths of their relatives. As I have set out in Chapters Two and Four, the genocide has served to fragment familiar domestic spaces in which the dead might otherwise have been buried following more familiar funeral custom.

Eda and May, for instance, the sisters described in the ethnographic extract earlier, lost most of their close relatives during the genocide and had now found somewhat tenuous residence with distant relations with whom they were not closely associated prior to 1994. Their situation reflects many of those working at the sites – an established identity as a Tutsi survivor of the genocide provided a modicum of security in the form of housing and monetary benefits from the state, but whose lives were empty of the material 'stuff' which might attach them to the past. These people spoke of the keen loss they felt in relation to houses, gardens and even clothing which had been lost to the wars.

How could the dead be given complete and satisfactory funeral rites in such situation? How could burial be satisfactorily arranged on land which was both unfamiliar and tenuous? For many people this holds significant sway over their decisions to move the bodies elsewhere. One young man asked me incredulously if I could imagine him standing alone with his one remaining sibling, in his isolated village, mourning at the grave of his family. He was insistent that such activity would be dangerous.

Similarly, Johan for instance, despite all of his fervent searching for his

wife's body, pointed out the bare patch of ground outside of his house where the remains of his extended family had been buried. He expressed satisfaction that they had been exhumed and moved into a collective community memorial. Later in the day we walked down the road to the community memorial where the bones had been relocated and placed in a collective. Now he said, he could sell the land on which the old burial plot stood.

Possessions and Dispossession

The situation is made more complex because the dead that are unearthed from mass graves are not just composed of the fleshy remains of bones and skin but also of personal possessions. Although it might be possible to easily de-individuate or avoid individuating the human remains of specific persons, particularly if the remains are already co-mingled, the unearthing of clothing, wallets, jewellery and other personal items renders the once living individual quite impossible to ignore.

A few weeks after the event involving Eda and Rose above I talked over the incident with Ava. I recalled that this was not the first time that some element of an individual had been found amongst the remains and then quickly placed aside. Anita, for instance, had also found evidence of her father's body in amongst the remains, picking out his brown overcoat and old pipe. Shortly afterwards these items were cast aside with the rest of the clothes, not to be returned to again.

I asked Ava why it was that exhumers did not take home personal possessions that belonged to relatives which were found at the graves.

> 'No! It it's not possible, it's prohibited, you cannot bring all those things at home, even I found like a, some jewel [a ring] of my brother, when we were removing all of the bodies in the ground [in 1998], then that jewel fell down, than I said oh this was, this was of my brother's, it was red, then after I washed it and I put it on me but from that day I was not able to talk, not able to talk, to do everything

> … I was like is this trauma or something because I wasn't able to speak, because even my arm wasn't able to work or move easily … so, then I said why is this, why is this happening?'

Ava goes on to describe her realisation that she was afflicted by 'genocide trauma', her catatonic state and the burning rash that covered her whole body is the physiological incarnation of grief and psychological distress with which many genocide Survivors report struggles.

The idea of maintaining links with the deceased through physical items which once belonged to them, especially their bodies, is relatively obscure to 'traditional' Rwandan culture (as I have mentioned in Chapter Five). The remainders of the individual dead located at the mass grave sites are highly problematic, given the fragmented nature of the bodies, and the lack of the usual funerary rites which would render the deceased a part of social memory in a familiar way. Tangible remains of the dead suddenly become important to their relatives in ways they have not previously. Yet these items do not serve comfortably as keepsakes to remember the lives of individual dead. Instead the object becomes an agent of violence, as if it continues to be infused with the decay and destruction which accompanied the violent death of the person to which it once belonged. The attempt to render the dead individuated through recovered grave remains fails and becomes an arbiter of further dissolution and grief. These items become poignantly synonymous with violence in and of itself. When Ada talks about why these items must be kept as part of the collective 'evidence' of genocide she mentions the need to leave personal possessions at the memorial sites with the weapons that were found there also.

Here again is a conflation of the state's desires for memorialisation and the similar and yet slightly different imperative for the Survivors to undertake this work.

When Ada talks about the fact that it is 'prohibited' to retain the remains she seems to mean both that it is highly problematic, almost taboo, to allow personal possessions associated with a decaying corpse to cross into the domestic space. This is not an unusual taboo, very broadly speaking. But Ada also means that the domestication of these items is 'prohibited' by the state, whose policy it is to retain all grave goods at the mass grave memorial sites, where they are sometimes used in displays evoking the violence of genocide and its imposition upon a mass collective of dead.

The presence of possessions associated with the death of individuated persons, and the need to retain those possessions for further use in some way, even though they are so catastrophically associated with the violent death of that person, revealed itself to be a highly ambiguous issue at both of the mass grave sites.

The human bones recovered from the mass graves sites were handled with great reverence, cleaned carefully, gently laid out on the tarpaulin and a great deal of energy was invested in carrying them up the steep hill to the site buildings where it was believed they would be protected from malicious persons and weather. Yet, personal possessions including clothes, ID cards and jewellery were handled with apparent disinterest. This abandonment of care extended to many things that were untangled from the bundles of corpses, including items that in other circumstances might be treated by the handler as special and precious personal possessions - rosaries for instance, and necklaces (traditionally given to women as a declaration of commitment akin to a marriage vow). Alongside numerous more mundane items, the flotsam of day-to-day life - wallets, carrier bags (some still containing bottles and food packages), hair combs, hair-pieces, notebooks, and other items that a person might carry on an average day. As each item was recovered it would be briefly inspected, perhaps some discussion would take place about what it

was. Wallets were always checked to see if they had been emptied, and very occasionally money was contained within - the 'old' Rwandan money before the new post-conflict currency was released; and everyone wanted to know what the liquid was that had survived the graves in a base of a glass jar (though none was brave enough to remove the lid). The bundle of Canadian health insurance cards that were found along with a sticky mass of burnt human remains were inspected closely by the student volunteers but more often the ID cards were glanced at briefly by the more seasoned exhumers and then completely dismissed. Occasionally Michael would bring one over to show me, running his thumb along the words and making sure that he carefully and slowly pronounced the words of the name and ethnic identity which was typed on the laminated square. Following these relatively brief attentions the item would very quickly be put to one side, usually placed in the battered cardboard box which was tucked under a plastic chair at the back of the site where it would be afforded no further attention.

Similarly, in contrast to the treatment of bodily remains, the many clothes that were separated from the former were thrown to one side, onto a giant heap next to the gravesites. The pile was abandoned for weeks, a mass of mouldy textiles that reeked of decay when the unseasonal rains rendered them wet and humid, and which then became infested with tiny scurrying cockroaches that plagued the site in the scorching drought which followed. Later on, several weeks after the exhumation work had finished, I returned to the site to meet with an NGO official. In the hall in which the bones had been laid out on tarpaulin I noticed the clothes shoved into charcoal sacks and stuffed into a corner of the room between the wall and a stack of chairs. The official told me, dismissively, that these were for a museum.

At Cyanika the textiles were slung over low wooden frames and beaten with brushes in an attempt to shake out some of the clumps of mud. The clothes retained the cloying smell, and the muddy gauze remained. Once

dry they were placed in a separate store room to the side of the site. The bones and fleshy remains were laid out on tarpaulins in a locked store room, with an armed security guarded posted outside of the door. The clothes, in contrast, were piled up in this store room, a space in which the windows and doors were left open, even at night.

Exhumed clothes, author's photograph, 2011

And yet these items are important. In Chapter Four I have described the riot that occurred when it was thought that workers at the site had removed sheets belonging to the deceased. In fact, the fear and distancing associated with these items is not because of disinterest but because they are incredibly powerful as evocations, even agents of violence, as I have discussed was the case with Ada's brother's jewellery. They are incredibly powerful in part because they suspend the individual dead in a state of attachment to a violent death, to an end, as opposed to an individual committed to a collective ancestral dead. In doing so personhood is suspended in a state of ongoing violation and thus instability. Clothes for instance, were particularly problematic in this respect because they are, more than with other things, an extension of a person (see discussions by Miller [2005]). The bones at the exhumation site at Nyanza had to be physically removed from their clothing, but these

clothes were much more problematic, the decay of the human remains had become ingrained in their fabric. The clothes decay as the bodies decay and it was often very difficult to separate one from the other, particularly in the case of soft flesh. At Cyanika where the soil had saturated the knit of fabric, the clothes were hung onto washing lines and then beaten with brushes and flat pieces of wood as a way of separating the dust of the dead and the earth from the fabric. The bodies are captured 'in-flow', exuding both the absence of an individual subject, and yet also the absence of any formative alternative state. They can never be part of a generalised dead, a dead that is 'settled' in the way it was thought other things could be.

Not all of the objects discovered from the gravesites were so easily associated with individual persons, even if they were possessions. So, for instance, the delicate gold necklace with an engraving of a saint that I had found whilst rinsing the bones was admired by all of the group I had been sitting with. Bernice inspected the pendant closely and suggested the name of the saint. She rubbed the muck off of the image, rinsed it the bowl of bones and finally hung the chain around her own neck: 'thanks!' she said with a grin, as everyone leaned forward over their washing bowls and returned to their routine conversation. Removed from the graves, but possible to 'wash' and separate from the death of an individual, the necklace, at least at this juncture, did not carry the problem of clothes and other identifiable personal possessions.

What these issues speak to is the great difficulty of rendering the dead of genocide tangible in any sort of settled form through their physical remains. In fact the problem is that the identity of the deceased, and that of the living, is irreconcilably tied to violence and rupture as a critical aspect of their contemporary identity. Yet, the state and the narrative that surrounds the genocide demand that these items be made substantive.

The association between these personal possessions of the deceased and the 'story' of the genocide Survivors was further evidenced by Johan who, in

the midst of one of our conversations, suddenly leapt up from his seat. "I must show you something" he said, disappearing into a back room and returning with a black *thawb*, a long loose tunic that he and his deceased wife then wore as attendees at the local mosque. During the genocide massacres the couple had heard rumours that the *interahamwe* were approaching the house. His wife persuaded him that he should wear her black dress, thus disguising him in the dark and allowing him to escape through the fields at the back of the house. His wife wore his white robes and remained in the house. They believed that the attackers, who were known to the couple, would not kill her. In the years that followed her death at the hands of the *interahamwe* he had kept this tunic as a reminder of her.

The item reminded of him of his wife, according to his recollection, in an attenuated fashion. It encapsulated for him, not the life of his wife but the moments of her death. The item is bearable and useful because it is not physically entangled with her corpse and yet it is part of the 'story' of genocide. Similarly, it is unlikely that clothing would have been treated in the way that the necklace was above. The clothing simply cannot be separated from the dead because the decay of the remains renders the deceased literally inseparable from the remains, regardless of some idea of the collective nature of the dead. I return to this issue in Chapter Seven in discussing the very difficult nature of the human remains and their entanglement with the memorials.

One of the only types of personal possession to cross the divide between domestic space and that of the memorial sites was portrait photographs. Many of the households in Kigali owned photographs of the deceased. In the years prior to the genocide photography had just started to become available to the general public, particularly in the capital city Kigali.[5] These photographs, where they were available, were sometimes

[5] None of the genocide survivors in Cyanika had photographs of deceased relatives that I was aware of. In most cases these people had always been extremely poor, too poor to afford a photograph, and

displayed in frames on the walls of houses. When the photographs were taken photography was a fairly new practice and often photographs of Survivors' parents were awkwardly posed, unsmilingly or caught slightly taken aback in the lens of the camera. This made the pictures seem all the more like snapshots of people caught in the moment of living, because they were often going about domestic tasks.

Photographs are emerging for many Survivors at the intersection between personal memory of the individual dead and public collective impressions and presence of the dead. Many houses do have portraits of the deceased. This was most marked in Kigali where people who had lived in the city appeared to have better access to cameras, and perhaps had been a little more affluent than their counterparts in rural areas. A portrait of a dead relative where it did exist was very often framed and placed on the wall of the main room. Often a purple ribbon, a remembrance marker of genocide was pinned to the frame. This was the case with Lawrence when we spoke in his living room. He, as with others, gestured towards the picture as we spoke about the death of his parents and his life now. The picture in Lawrence's case as with many other people was often a little blurry but it mattered to people that the photograph was there on the wall and they could gesture towards the frame and show the living image of individual people and family members.

Photographs of the deceased have often become important in instances which the remains of the dead are missing. Callister has pointed out the importance of photographs to New Zealander families of WWII victims. The distance from the battlefield rendered the likelihood of a return of remains remote, and in the absence of the bodies photographs stood in for that absence, providing some comfort and closure (Callister 2007). More than this though Callister argues that photographs allowed New Zealanders to 'imagine a communal sense of loss and bereavement'.

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most had anyhow lost all of their possessions during the conflict.

As Cristian Metz points out (cited in Callister) photography is 'peculiarly adapted to represent death. Its intrinsic characteristics, stillness and silence, he noted, are the main symbols of death. For him the 'stillness' of photography 'maintains the memory of the dead *as being dead'*. Photographs make absence visible (Batchen in Callister). Without bodies of the dead, and without personal possessions, and without much of the usual accoutrements accompanying the rites to assist the living to move into a coherent state of death, the absence of the deceased can only vaguely be located in the violated clothing and personal possessions that may have been located at the exhumation sites.

In most cases where photographs did exist however, they were used in association with commemorative activities which often evoked stories of the dead in testimony. They were entirely absent from association with the crypts containing human remains, except in the rare cases that the human remains had been placed in coffins in individuated form, as was the case with Robert's parents above.

In Nyamata, In Cyanika and in Nyanza there were no photographs present at all. Even including the names of the dead was the subject of ongoing argument, as I will discuss in the following chapter.

Conclusions

Many Rwandans are desperately searching for the remains of their dead relatives. Where these remains are located they are frequently highly problematic to manage. The bodies may be literally fragmented, but so is the context in which the dying, those existing in a state of in-between would normally be returned to some settled status as dead.

The genocide has generated a great crisis in the way that the individualised dead can or should be remembered in the aftermath of this conflict. This is not just a tangible dissolution of the person, it has rendered pre-genocide personhood often difficult to resolve with post-genocide identities in formation. The dead become somehow spectral. Despite all of the hard

work of sifting out remains from the exhumation sites, and the careful echoing of some semblance of mortuary practice the dead are never comfortably committed to an afterlife.

This issue is complicated by the presence of the memorial sites, and the state's insistence that remains be placed within these spaces. The genocide dead, as with other dead for whom social ceremony has yet to be performed, are understood to be liminal, they are Turner's (1967) 'betwixt and between', neither one nor the other state. This is understood to be a dangerous and powerful position and one which is useful to the RPF in its organisation of the memorials.

The anxiety that surrounds the work at the exhumation sites is obviously generated by the presence of individuated remains that cannot be committed to generalised dead. Just as the controversy in relation to these remains is poignantly present in the fact that the genocide Survivors themselves, people who are working so hard to find missing remains, are also responsible for moving the remains of individual dead into generalised collective with no attempt to hang onto the remnants of the individual dead which do remain. The deceased become, rather like the living, part of a genocide narrative which emphasises immense destruction with no resolution, thus attenuating their lives as 'dead' persons.

Perhaps this is why possessions clearly associated with violence, and seemingly impossible to disassociate from it, are comfortably associated with the collective history of the genocide Survivors. As Ada pointed out in the course of the argument about whether personal possessions should remain at the grave sites, these are "one of the signs of genocide, of *our* story". The story of the dead and of the living.

What emerges from the meeting of the Survivors and the remains is a ritual which could echo mortuary practice in its structure (as discussed in the previous chapter) but which culminates in a funeral process that doesn't echo the usual shift of identity for the dead that would occur when funerary

processes are completed in Rwanda. In the final chapter I discuss the final interment of the remains and the manifestation of this irresolution at the heart of the memorials.

Chapter Seven: Uncanny Memorials

Introduction

In this chapter I bring together the threads of analysis found in Chapters Two to Six in order to contemplate the situation of the exhumed human remains once they are interred within the memorial sites. The discussion here follows the first genocide commemoration event at Cyanika exhumation site. This event took place over the course of one day and included a commemorative service which took place on a field just outside of the memorial buildings. This service was followed by a procession into the memorial, and a viewing of the human remains within, which was attended by a select, albeit large, number of service attendees. This chapter splits discussion into a consideration of the commemorative event as is took place inside and outside of the memorial buildings.

Contemporary genocide commemorative services in Rwanda that involve bones and bodies of the dead echo the structure of contemporary Rwandan funeral practice. Just as funeral rites attempt to resolve the liminal state of the dying (and broader social instability) and serve to articulate new personhood in the event of death, so these memorial performances bind together the work of remembering genocide as a place of destruction and instability, with the categories of identity - of victims and of perpetrators - which have emerged in its wake. During the service on the grass outside of the memorial buildings the bodies of the genocide dead are both symbolically bound to the body of the nation and its ruling elite, and become part of the performance of articulating belonging (or marking degrees of estrangement) between these groups of people and the ‘new’ nation of Rwanda.

Inside the memorial, at the point at which the exhumed human remains are not just symbolically present, but material things which are entangled with the ritual process, this attempt at settling the dead into their new role begins to collapse.

The human remains are uncanny: they frighten and evoke a sense of dread amongst the attendees. The bones fail to fully embody a settled and dignified dead. The bones profoundly unseat the security of all that is known and knowable, revealing the fragility of the meaning of things and thus the relationship between the people and the objects that are assembled in these moments.

Commemoration and Funerals for the Dead

The first genocide commemorative service at the Cyanika memorial took place in the April of the same year that the bodies had been exhumed. A grass field close to the memorial building was set aside for the performance. Flanking the field was the church mission buildings, behind which sat the new memorial. In between these two structures were the excavated mass graves. Standing with your back to the church and the memorial the field overlooked a meeting of tracks - the main road from Nyamagabe town passed through here and away to the right, skirting the edge of the large district secondary school, and eventually descending extremely steeply into the sizeable village of Cyanika itself. At a bend in the road, just as it began its descent were the abandoned World Food Programme shelters that had sheltered the canopies where the remains had been transformed. Immediately to the right of the onlookers view there was an extremely busy local clinic with hospital facilities. The local primary school was attached to this building.

> I travelled from Kigali on the morning of the ceremony and arrived in Nyamagabe later than I hoped. The regular bus service had been suspended by the police and we hire motorbikes for the final stretch of the journey from Nyamagabe to Cyanika. On the dusty road between Nyamagabe town and Cyanika the bikes weave precariously around an alien and fast-moving traffic of expensive four- wheel drives, presumably also from Kigali. When we reach the site it is almost unrecognisable. More of the same expensive cars are parked bumper to

bumper along the road that skirts the edge of the mission grounds and in the other direction, as the track sweeps around the fields that had housed the washing area and away into the distance along the road to Cyanika village.

A large canopied area has been set up in front of the Church, with the back of the tent against the road and the front facing the flat open green space that runs up to the steep embankment in front of the Church Mission buildings. Row upon row of chairs have been placed on the steep hilly bank. In the green field in between and close to the edge of the canopy, a raised platform hosts a few framed photographs. We arrive into a throng of a hundreds of people. In the shelter of the canopy, shielded from view, are seated government and state officials, and a large number of well-dressed guests, many of whom have appear to have travelled here from Kigali in the vehicles parked along the road behind us.

The seats on the embankment are full with school children and villagers, the survivors who have undertaken the exhumations are in amongst this group. Crowds of people are standing squashed into the space between the back of the canopy, the entrance to the field and a steep drop where a wall banks up the ground between the open space and the road on the other side. We edge our way into the group, all of whom are attempting to get closer to the ceremony. Behind us there are more and more people craning to see. Two of the crowd are waving tattered pieces of cardboard with anti-genocide slogans painted on them in wobbly lettering.

EDITED FROM FIELDNOTES APRIL 2012

In the fieldnote above I describe the commemorative service at Cyanika prior to the movement of events to the inside of the memorial. The scene emulates more mundane Rwandan funeral rites. At the front of the canopied area a few coffins containing bones are laid out in formal

presentation in front of the onlookers seated underneath.

This was an important moment in proceedings, here most clearly was a juncture at which 'dignity' was to be declared restored to the dead, to the people who were deemed to have been denied this in the violation of their bodies and the hasty concealment of the remains at their deaths.

Yet, this was not a resolution attempted through a 'gathering-in' and repositioning of the remains as associated with individual persons, as Renshaw (2010) argues is the case in Spain. Similarly, there is no attempt as is the case in Srebrenica, to settle the dead through the massive task of reuniting names to bodily remains (Wagner 2008). Although the mechanics of funeral rites and the moral impetus to treat the dead with respect are harnessed, they are moved forward in less familiar ways.

Funerary performance, including songs and speeches would normally take place which extol the virtues of the dead and place them within the broader context of the family of the deceased. During the national commemorative events as exemplified by the one above, the singular dead may be evoked but they are evoked as part of a collective dead of genocide: stories of their lives, where these are included, frame their untimely and violent death. Rituals, speech and song enact the entanglement between these dead and the physical and moral violence of the genocide, the narrative reaching its zenith in sermons which offer the attendees pedagogical guidance, often including elements of familiar narrative extolling national reconciliation efforts and popular notions of Christian forgiveness.

This shift between familiar funeral service and commemorative event is critical: it clearly moves the work away from mourning in relation to the individual dead and binds it to the production of collective national identity in the wake of genocide. In doing so, this is a key moment in the movement of the dead from the disparate scattered remains of individual people, to a collective of genocide victims. The memory of the individual dead is not given significance here because it is not the aim of this work to allow all of

the nuances of past lives to find some continuity with the present, it is instead the invocation of the violent death of a body of people, of a rupture between the past and the present, which is the salient subject.

Genocide commemorative services year on year emulate the scene above. Most often events revolve around moving human remains which have been found or deliberately exhumed the previous year into memorial sites. Not all sites of genocide memory in Rwanda involve human remains but the great majority of commemorative events do circle around the bodies of the dead. Whether this is in ceremonies at gravesides, in processions which begin or end at these sites, or in services which are not associated with the burials themselves but which often include graphic descriptions of the deaths of victims, sometimes including actual visual recordings of that violence. It is important that the bodies be present at these events, it is not enough to speak abstractly of 'the dead': the material presence of the remains does something important to validate these proceedings.

The RPF argue that the work of exhumation and the memorialisation of the dead which follows this process is with the aim of offering 'dignity' to the dead. This a reparative strategy which suggests a 'healing' of broken bonds, and a bridge over the rupture and uncertainty of identity that is created when the dead do not receive appropriate funerary rites and thus settled identity as deceased kin to living counterparts.

However, the material remains of the dead in this case will not, or cannot, be returned as individuals to the family with whom they were once associated. Instead, these remains are drawn into efforts to consolidate a collective Tutsi identity, an identity that is in a state of shift in the aftermath of the genocide and its creation of a collective of Tutsi victims, along with a new Tutsi-dominated political elite originating in the diaspora.

It is in these moments of commemorating the dead, in the performance of funerary rituals which is designed to settle those dead, that the

relationship between the Tutsi elite and a collective body of Tutsi is established.

At this funeral service, where close family and neighbours would normally serve as the inner circle of accompaniment to the remains of the dead, instead state officials and members of Kigali's wealthy elite were seated in front of the remains. Quite possibly some of those seated under the canopy knew of relatives entombed in the memorial. However, the unfortunate distance between the canopy and coffins, and the mass of villagers seated on the other side of the field rendered the latter group as witnesses, or at least it established a hierarchy between the participants in this ceremony in which the survivor-exhumers were not given a high status. Rather as the relationship between the RPF and the Survivors in the broader sphere is determined by one of uneven patronage, here officials demonstrate the uneven nature of power over these remains and their management.

This generation of relationship is about more than a simple act of demonstrating an autochthonous association with Rwanda as a place. This is also a national commemorative service as well as site of funerary practice. As Winter points out, the origins of modern commemoration are linked to a 20th century shift in the way 'the nation' as a community was affirmed:

> After August 1914 commemoration was an act of citizenship. To remember was to affirm community, to assert its moral character, and to exclude from those values, groups, or individuals that placed it under threat. (Winter 2014b, 80).

This work is part of generating the 'imagined political community' of the nation as Benedict Anderson understood it (2006, 6). The nation is select in the members that it includes, and it is those who participate in, and are honoured during commemoration who are fully included within its boundaries. In Rwanda, therefore, this is not only a public proclamation of the centrality of the Tutsi genocide victim as seated at the heart of the 'new' nation of Rwanda, but it is also a public proclamation of the relationship between the genocide victims and Rwanda's new elite.

The remains of the conflict dead and their ritual resettling have also formed the central preoccupation of national post-conflict commemoration activities in Zimbabwe, as described by, for example, Werbner (1998). At 'heroes acre', a cemetery in the capital city Harare a select number of war dead form the centre point of the performance of elite commemorative activities. These 'liberation heroes' symbolise the sacrifice of the many in the pursuit of the liberation of Zimbabwe from colonial occupation: in the commemorative work associated with them the validity of that sacrifice and the accompanying violence is sanctified by the state.

Zimbabwe's new political elite associate with the dead in ways similar to Rwanda. At annual public commemorative services in Zimbabwe, according to Werbner, the performance of elite attendees must match the emotions of the bereaved kin of the deceased, and these same elite must perform services to the dead as if they are direct genealogical descendants. Although Werbner does not articulate it in quite such a way, what is established here is not just the symbolic relations of kinship between a 'heroic' war dead and a governing elite, but a quite literal attachment generated through proper commitment to rites of passage, to the passage into death in this case. The dead are also simultaneously reconstituted in these acts, in their binding to the body of the post-independence Zimbabwean nation. This demonstrates the function of mortuary and of funeral rites as projects of rebirth and renewal in the face of destruction, for both the dying and of the community that surrounds the deceased.

Zimbabwe's Zanu-PF chose particular heroes, drawn from the political elite, for this focus (Werbner 1998, 78). This is necessary because the nature of that sacrifice and the category of personal identity with which it is associated must define the boundaries of the nation and solidify an elite claim to power. In Zimbabwe's case what is commemorated is the liberation from a colonial oppressor but it is also about defining who may make a claim to full citizenship and who may claim sovereign power in Zimbabwe, to the exclusion of others.

The genocide dead of Rwanda are subject to similar pressures of profile, with a similar impetus but the conflict and associated shift in political structure is of drastically different form and therefore the articulation of sacrifice and of identity of the conflict dead is also very different. The bodies enshrined within the memorials are not war heroes as such, and their commitment to the nation is not in a form that could be conceived of as the idealised altruistic sacrifice of a warrior. Their deaths were purposive but exercised upon them, and although they might be personified as having committed a kind of sacrifice, this must be framed in terms of the moral sacrifice of a saint or religious martyr - killed because of an association with divine personhood, in this case with the superior moral identity of Tutsi personhood (as popular discourse in Rwanda conceives of it).

In the generation of a memorial infrastructure both Zimbabwe and Rwanda align with 'modern' state commemorative work, however, the particular articulation or absence of attributions to the individual dead also sets them at odds with this work.

After the First World War it was the individual 'heroic' dead, the common solider, who was the focus of national commemorative efforts. Massive effort was made to acknowledge in name each of the soldiers killed in battle. This effort was necessary because the state relied upon the support of the 'common' soldier in its war work, propaganda in support of the war effort emphasised the need for all 'citizens' to unite against an external enemy (the force with which all were intended to be included can be seen in the harsh conditions that faced those who objected to conscription during WWI, and the necessity of the establishment of tribunal proceedings which allowed a special kind of citizenship to be allocated to those who objected during WWII). The role of commemoration in this work was so great that, as Winter (2014a, 79) points out, this kind of organised memorialisation work took place even as the war was ongoing.

In Zimbabwe the mass of the individual and unknown dead are given cursory acknowledgement in the form of a cenotaph which sits in a forgotten corner of Heroes Acre. The state has decreed that the individual dead are otherwise commemorated at village level and offers little support in attempts to do that.

This neglect to recognise the larger population's involvement in Zimbabwe's past conflict is not without frustration from Zimbabweans. The appropriation of bodies by the state for burial at Heroes Acre for example, may not be without reticence from relatives of those deceased individuals: an expression which may be very public. The state needs the family of the deceased heroes to take part in the performance of bereavement at commemorative services but these relatives may also take the opportunity to publically disrupt the formalities unfolding at those services (Werbner 1998, 87). Furthermore, as Werbner (1998, 98) notes the often unfinished nature of memorials to war heroes in Zimbabwe, particularly at the local level, can be interpreted as a kind of resistance to the state's impositions.

Rebellion against the state directed commemoration in Rwanda is very muted. Few Rwandans feel able to speak openly in opposition to the government, particularly with regards to national memorial practice. There is however, sometimes a quiet disregard for these practices and for the decorum which they should demand (see for example, Thomson 2013):

> We reach the edge of the canopy, just as a government official, also a familiar informant, squeezes out of the shelter and gives me a despairing nod. He looks harried. Over our heads plastic chairs are being passed, and the crowd is roughly shoved out of the way for a guest to pass through and into the seating area. 'They don't have enough chairs for the people' my friend talks over my shoulder in the crush – indicating the expensively dressed audience under the canopy, and the official, who is shouting instructions at some porters.

> It looks like I will not be able to move closer the front of the group and we are trapped awkwardly within a tightly packed crowd in front of a wall of men in sunglasses – private security for those seated within. Eventually we squeeze around the back of the canopy and mix in with the mass of people who are peering over the top of the sea of chairs, or squashed against the outside of the canopy and straining to hear the events in the square. At my feet children are lying flat on the ground and peeking under the canopy.
>
> The crowd it seems are more taken with the excitement of the visitors than with the memorial service. The mood at my spot outside the canopy is curious rather than sombre. The children are soon bored of spying on the feet of the people sat in the tent, and hung off my arms asking for sweets and pennies. Groups of women gossip and laugh together. An elderly man interrupted my attempt to hear the ceremony to interrogate me about my odd lack of a seat and whether I had money I could give him for a goat, "not even a cow! A goat! One goat only!".
>
> **EDITED FROM FIELDNOTES APRIL 2012**

Not many of the people in amongst the crowd outside of the tent were trying very hard to listen to the service. Instead it was the spectacle that the service produced which was the topic of conversation. The arrival of visitors to the service had halted everyday activity. The many cars, of which there were usually very few, if any, in the villages, lined the roadways, hampering the usual movement of people and smaller vehicles through these spaces. The village was cut off from the main town to anyone without a private vehicle as the police had halted public transport. Shops, the school, and the clinic were ordered closed. What was impressed upon people was the spectacle of wealth and of power, the ability of these visitors and this event, of the dead, to halt the normal everyday flow of life through the area.

It could be argued that memorials in Rwanda may also remain 'unfinished'

or vandalised as a kind of purposive resistance. I met with officials who frequently told me that memorials had to be protected otherwise they would be covertly altered or damaged. One official showed me a photograph of the polished stone memorial that had been constructed in order to commemorate the genocide victims thrown into the Nyabarongo River. A number of names engraved onto the stone had been very carefully and determinedly scratched off. The official argued that this was the result of revisionism, of the further deletion of a body, albeit a symbolic destruction, by the génocidaires who had tried so hard to destroy the bodies of the Tutsi during the genocide. Equally though, these omissions and erasures could be an intentional disassociation carried out by an associate of the named individual, a deliberate separation between this person and the state's memorialisation efforts. As I have discussed in Chapter Six, even amongst the exhumer-Survivors who were so committed to this project in other ways, there were quandaries about the form and content of the memorials. Certainly inside Cyanika there was sustained debate about whether or not names of the dead whose bones were believed to be resting on the shelving, should be included on lists inscribed on plaques inside the memorial. The names of the individual dead are so rarely associated with memorials of any kind in Rwanda, and are very tentatively placed where they are associated. The memorial wall at the AEGIS memorial in central Kigali, and the similar wall which had been in place for some time at the Nyanza memorial site were both recognizably short of names at the time of this fieldwork.

This 'resistance' to the use of names within the memorials however is not just the preserve of some Rwandan citizens, it is also a state concern. The individual dead are highly problematic. Not only are the individual histories of the victims interred within the memorials contested, but in their association with the genocide commemoration, personal biographies become flattened, often reduced to their violent death as a facet of the work remembering genocide. Although it is important to acknowledge the very large number of individual dead, there is no impetus to allocate these persons individual and named graves. This is in direct contrast with

Srebrenica where a proportional ethnic power-sharing government and the availability of new scientific tools in DNA analysis and forensic technique opened up the space for the identification of individuals to take place (Wagner 2008). Nor are the conditions similar to those of Spain in which a second generation elite themselves called for the identification of the individual dead. Rwanda can be contrasted with Argentina, where the individual dead are searched for and identification attempted, thus allowing the possibility of burial as individuals; and where human rights organisations, including bereaved relatives have worked hard to campaign for a detailed revealing of the histories of their deaths as individuals (Crossland 2000; Robben 2015).

Of course, once the work of exhumation has rendered remains a de-individuated collective it is also very difficult to establish which individuals are contained within the memorials as this placement, in most cases (with specific exceptions which I have discussed) breaks the obvious link between particular families and specific sets of remains. In Chapters Five and Six I have emphasised the survivor-exhumers uncertainty over how to manage the material remains (both remains of bodies and of personal possessions) of relatives killed during the genocide. It is difficult for a secure association to be made between these remnants of the dead, and familiar mortuary and funeral rites. The dead and their living relatives are too tightly bound to the 'critical event' of genocide to allow familiar burial to take place. These are not "normal" dead as the exhumer-survivors constantly reminded me. This is not just a concern with the settling of the dead otherwise unseated from familiar structures of meaning, it is also about a tangible shift in the salience of everyday practices, a place in which the security of domestic space is uncertain, and in which the usual means of reinforcing association with family and kin cannot be replicated. As a result, placing these human remains inside the memorials is sometimes seen as a satisfactory resolution. Placing the remains here, at least for the Survivors, insinuates that the dead are bound to the state and its elite, a hope for some form of security, both for the living and perhaps for the dead

as well.

In fact, once placed inside the memorials, the properties of these corporeal remnants of the dead prohibit the stable emergence of dead persons (or of persons at all) and a profound uncertainty rather than security is generated, as the next section of the chapter will set out. Benedict Anderson pre-empts the strange status of the Rwandan memorials in this paragraph:

> No more arresting emblems of the modern culture of nationalism exist than cenotaphs and tombs of Unknown Soldiers. The public ceremonial reverence accorded these monuments precisely *because* they are either deliberately empty or no one knows who lies inside them, has no true precedents in earlier times. To feel the force of this modernity one has only to imagine the general reaction to the busy-body who 'discovered' the Unknown Soldier's name or insisted on filling the cenotaph with some real bones. Sacrilege of a strange, contemporary kind! Yet void as these tombs are of identifiable mortal remains or immortal souls, they are nonetheless saturated with ghostly *national* imaginings (Anderson 2006, 9)

The reference to a ghostly national imagining is important. The bones and human remains placed inside the Cyanika memorial should be those of a 'settled' collective dead in keeping with the funeral rites which have been afforded them. However, what the use of human remains demonstrates is that these memorials embody a clash of purpose that is born out of a rooting of national commemorative work in the remembrance of genocide. There are no heroes to commemorate in celebrating a nation born anew. Instead, this is a nation which finds its origins in rupture. These memorialisation activities undergird a broader rhetoric of the rebirth of the Rwandan nation, as a state which defines itself in opposition to the death of a previous community and its catastrophic failure of morals (as the genocide has been cast).

In this capacity the human remains that are interred within these memorials serve dual and competing purpose. Funeral and commemorative ritual is organised in order to resolve the disruption of death, but remembrance and commemoration of rupture must also remain as a key facet of the nation's existence.

At the heart of this tangle, at these 'knots of memory' in which 'categories of national and ethnic identity, institutions of knowledge-production, nation-states, and many embattled communities' (Rothberg 2010, 7) find themselves at cross- purposes, are seated these exhumed human remains.

In examining the interruption of these remains upon commemorative proceedings I follow the movement of the service to the inside of the memorials and a confrontation of the bones which lie within.

Uncanny Remains

The second part of the commemorative service at Cyanika took place inside the newly constructed memorial. There was quite a gap between the service in the field and the events that would take place inside the building and in the meantime I found the Survivor-exhumers in amongst the crowd that was milling around the outside of the service. The group were dressed in white mourning drapes and waiting to be allowed through the security cordon which had been set up a distance away from the memorial building. With Julia's insistence (see Chapter Three) I joined the survivors on the steps where they were waiting to be allowed into the building. The friend who had stood with me in the crowd was not allowed to move closer to the memorial, those allowed inside comprise of the guests seated under the canopy and other members of the genocide survivor community who are vetted on entry by a team of security guards.

The building has been designed specifically for the purpose of housing remains accessibly and allowing routine access for visitors. This is a new strategy: previously, purposely designed memorial structures had been set up rather as more conventional museums might be organised, with a building laid out over several floors, or they have been one open space, often slightly altered from the original spaces of massacres, with clothing and personal

possessions for the dead, along with signage, as the main focus. Although much has been made of the function of these memorials as sites of dark tourism (for example, Friedrich and Johnston, 2013) at this site and others it seemed as though architecture lent itself to the memorial service and to the continued visitation by attendants rather than foreign tourists specifically.

The memorial is a large circular structure, a squat of concrete which is sunk into the ground so that the lower floor that will house the remains is below the level of the ground. The entrance to the main structure is via wide concrete terraces which act as steps wrapping around one half of the building. Access to the building is through wide steel gates at the base of the terraces. Around the other side of the building, exactly the same wide steel gates and terraced steps are used as an exit, mirroring the entrance. Inside the sunken crypt the roof is high and the space is bare of anything aside from the tomb of the priest and his family, a raised concrete block in the centre of the structure. The human remains are housed in alcoves which are set into the walls of the inside of the structure. The bones and human remains are placed on thick concrete shelving which runs from the floor to around seven feet high.

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There is a paradox at the heart of the exhumation and interment project which is suddenly at its most stark when the mass of exhumed and transformed human remains and the living mourners for the dead meet inside this building.

The ‘charge’ that human remains impose upon memorial spaces is the subject of Florence Bernault’s (2010) interrogation of the perplexing exhumation and reburial of the body of Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza, an agent of the imperial regime who explored what was to become French Congo in his youth, and in his later years denounced colonial abuse in the

region, a story much romanticised by France and, more recently, by political powers in Brazzaville. The body of Brazza and that of his family were moved from burial in Algeria to a lavish tomb constructed in the centre of the city. Both French, Congolese and direct descendants of Brazza attended the reinterring which was intended to commemorate Brazza as an ancestor/founder of the city.

At first look, this scene is the culmination of a fairly common process in which a body, human remains in this instance, becomes the commodity at the centre of a political transaction. The repatriation of Brazza's remains 'is a transactional machine that produces moral credence and hard political value' (Bernault 2010, 370) On the small scale these are the values which drive families to consider funerals and associated appropriate burial highly important at all costs. On the larger scale, the notion that human remains have this capacity is well known; it sits at the foundation of all of the work discussed above in relation to the unearthing and identification of the lost millions of WWI and WWII.

However, as Bernault points out, there is much more to these actions on the part of the global political power than simply the transactional value of remains:

> Behind the pompous discourses, the lavish ceremonies, and the vulgar architecture, Brazza's cadaver is *the thing* that empowers everything else, the flesh that sanctifies the stone, and the substance that charges the shrine (Bernault 2010, 371)

As I have set out in Chapter Five, human remains have a special status. Once exhumed and identified as *human* remains, 'the presence of the dead' as framed by Williams:

> Provides an agency to affect the experience and actions of the mourners and evoke memories of the past, rather than serving as static and passive sets of substances manipulated and disposed of by the mourners to serve their socio- political ends (2004, 265).

Williams argues that it is not just the act of reburial, or memorial interment which catalyses an accompanying reorganisation of socio-political space

(as a function of funeral rituals - see Chapters Five and Six for discussion), but also the presence of corporeal materials - 'the body' of the deceased - that intervenes in collective action. Running along a similar vein of analysis, Filippucci et al. (2013) identified this 'agency' of corporeal materials in the 'felt presence' of human remains that they suggest is indicative not just of an affective force of presence, but of absence too. In this view, human remains are active and unsettling precisely because they elide full expression and stability. They are excessive to and never fully stable in meaning (Filippucci et al. 2013), but are rather always implicated in problematic, open-ended processes of 'becoming', an indeterminate existence that being but does not (and cannot) end with their emergence from these graves, or even with their re- interment in now collective memorials. This absence of meaning, and the uncanny sense that it evokes has been picked up on by those who have attended the memorials as international visitors, and indeed it is part of the allure of those sites.

The state may deliberately employs these remains, 'the excessive potentialities of the properties of the human substances' as Fontein (2014) notes in relation to the state's work with exhumed human remains in Zimbabwe, arguing that it is the profoundly 'evocative and affective, yet unstable, uncertain and ultimately indeterminate materialities' (Fontein 2014, 128) which grants these items a particular agency, a particular force of presence. Inside the Rwandan memorials, and particularly at these moments of commemorative activity these human remains become part of a project of remembering the genocide (and thus its significance to the state) in visceral almost tangible ways:

> I search for the survivor-exhumers for a while but eventually come across Julia who is dressed in the traditional white mourning material. She tells me that the exhumers have an important role to perform inside the memorials, the group will assist the mourners who attend the space. Not all of the commemorative service attendees are allowed inside the space, in fact the impression is that

the bulk of these attendees will be family and friends of the priest and his family. Inside the memorial the survivor-exhumers are organised, one or two in front of each alcove. We are handed two packets of tissues each, our task is to hand these out to those passing by the alcoves. Once the transition from the memorials space itself is announced crowds move quickly into the memorial, moving from the terraces and through the gated entrance. As the crowds move into the memorial the functions of the two doors becomes obvious, as the exit door allows people to move from one side of the memorial structure and out of the other. The mirroring of the traditional structure of Rwandan houses is also interesting, because of the way in which this work likens the movement of people through the memorial to that of people moving through the house, viewing the deceased inside the structure as they move through the space.

In the event the crowds are not easy to control, once the gates are opened more and more people crush into this space. Many cry and wail, two young women walk along the edges of each other gripping each other tightly, they look terrified. Nobody asks for the tissues, in fact our role standing in front of the alcoves seems to serve more as a living buffer between those observing the remains and the remnants of human bodies which lie on the shelves behind us. At the entrance way people are grappling with an older woman who as begun to shriek the names of two people over and over again until she is hyperventilating and collapses on the steps blocking the path of the people flowing around her as friends try to hook under her armpits and by her feet and carry her out of the memorial.[1]

There are officials posted at the entrance of the memorial but they

[1] At the clinic next door to the memorial many mattresses have been laid out in the clinic waiting room - here women suffering from 'trauma' are laid out on the floor for hours, even days, as hysteria gives way to a kind of catatonic depression.

> can do little to stem the tide of people, as the memorial becomes crushed full and we are pushed up against the concrete shelving and the human remain. It is very hot and loud, the human remains smell strongly of decay despite all of the cleaning. Solomon cries into his sleeve with his jacket held over his face.
> Above us, people are crushed up against the window in the roof, peering down at the scene below.
>
> **EDITED FROM FIELDNOTES, APRIL 2012**

As the crowds entered the Cyanika memorial the emotions that were drawn from them as they faced the shelves of human remains was distressing. In fact, in the bodily distress that was exhibited by the mourners, in the screaming, crying, the gasping for breath, and the loss of control over limbs these living bodies seemed to mirror the excessive potentiality, the excessive 'flow', inherent in the human remains placed on the shelving. There is here also an interesting harkening back to the state's dual claim to control over the genocide 'archive', whilst simultaneously and in contradiction, emphasising the ways in which the archive of evidence, the substance and indicators of genocide's violence, was more than could be contained.

It is in the unsettling use of these remains in these spaces that the differentiation between state and Survivor intention for the exhumed remains became stark. In Chapter Five I have discussed the ways in which the careful attentions of the Survivor-exhumers were turned towards the emergence of persons from the often incoherent mass of material removed from the mass grave sites. In the hard work of 'washing' the remains, in the smoothing over of the boundaries of the fragments of the body, and in the act of handling these remains as if the object was a person, so persons began to emerge.

In the memorials however, out of the hands of the exhumers, and placed on shelving, these human remains begin to sink back into the state of

uncertainty that is so productive for genocide commemorative purposes. The 'problem' of housing what should be persons within the memorials was evident in the continued and anxious attentions paid by the exhumers to these sites. The exhumers continually referred to the remains as 'people' and they articulated this claim in a variety of ways. For example, they petitioned the memorial officials to have the shelves lined with soft matting as they had decided that it was improper for the bones to be placed on bare shelving as they should not "sleep like prisoners". Even more telling was the Survivors constant concerns that the remains required some form of attention. It suddenly became apparent that when the state and the Survivors spoke of fears that the remains would 'disappear' without appropriate attention they spoke of parallel and yet slightly different intentions. For the state, this was a concern that the evocative and powerful substance of corporeal remains would become impossible to separate from the graves. For the Survivors however, this disappearance takes on new meaning, without their continued attentions visible human remains became something else, suddenly clearly an inchoate 'thing' without boundary or meaningful definition.

Although there was little talk amongst the exhumers about spirits or ghosts in association with these remains, it was at these sites that the human remains strongly evoked a sense of the uncanny, they slid back into potential emergence as something, they retained 'some spectral sense that they could be someone' (Harries, 2016: forthcoming).

These remains did not therefore give an impression of the dead settled, but demanded ongoing attention. Indeed, the Survivors did not want to leave the memorials unattended after the event. They told me that that they would visit them "all the time". There was an ongoing debate at Cyanika, for instance, over whether or not the doors to the memorial sites should be opened or closed, many wanted glass doors so that the remains could still be viewed on the shelving. Marie confessed that she was afraid that "ants" and "spiders" would crawl over the bones if they were not regularly

attended to. Sarah caught the sentiment for me exactly, when I asked her what she thought of the new memorial and whether she would continue to visit the remains she answered me sharply “to visit? I would move my bed in the memorial if I could, I would never stop looking at those bones”.

Chapter Eight: Concluding Comments

Summary

This research set out to understand the actions and concerns of those who discover conflict victims' remains in Rwanda, who must manage them after their discovery, and also of those survivors who wish to locate the remains of loved ones still missing.

Initial research objectives and questions were as follows: What happens to victims' remains that are and have been discovered within and outside of Rwanda? What key issues concern those who discover, manage or who are searching for victims' remains? What problems or disagreements arise during the course of the search, discovery and reburial of victims and what could be done to help solve these problems?

In investigating these questions I have taken part in the process of exhuming and transforming human remains from two mass graves purported to contain the bodies of Rwandan genocide victims. I worked alongside exhumers as we transformed a mass of substances from buried and incoherent matter to a collective of human remains, personal possessions and associated remnants. Alongside this work I engaged in conversation with exhumer-Survivors about their present and past lives.

Discussion about past violent experience, and about the difficult political and social relationships which these people must negotiate is, and should be, limited in accordance with the needs and wishes of informants. But through careful and attentive attendance to the events of day to day life, both exceptional (the case of mass grave exhumations) and relatively mundane, information can be shared.

Those Tutsi who lived through the violence of the 1990s find themselves in an extremely precarious place. They must find some niche, some way to get by, for themselves within present day Rwanda. These people often

struggle with great economic and social deficit. Many people after the genocide and conflict of the 1990s also feel a great draw towards communicating the losses and pain they have suffered during past violence. There are many reasons behind the drive for communication, including desires for reparation or revenge, the wish to reconcile in a relatively straight-forward sense, the division between perpetrator of a crime and its victim. In a more complex sense there may be a need to 'heal' ruptures between people, to find some bridge between the 'here' of the relatively mundane everyday and the 'there' of the chaos, degeneration and destruction of intense war and genocide.

Claiming status as genocide 'Survivor' offers a way to address of some of these issues. It allows avenues through which distress can be communicated. Though attendance at memorial services and events is a common activity for Survivors, there are also more subtle and emerging significances to this identity. The event of genocide, and the political and social unrest and dissolution which preceded and followed it, disrupted ties between people both formal and informal. In the 'coming together' of the genocide Survivors a community is emerging anew.

Survivor-citizenship identity is somewhat complicated by the fact that the genocide Survivors sit at the margins of citizenry, and of the ability to claim rights in return for duties as demanded by the government as a politic. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that the RPF-led government situates itself as a liberal democratic state whilst taking on more of an authoritarian rule. The dismissal of ethnic identity as a category of recognition that is publically acceptable is particularly problematic, because underneath this declaration of 'unity' for all Rwandans, the RPF government as an administration does appear to discriminate on the basis of ethnic identity, and is itself defined by both a past and present which is dominated by a majority Tutsi membership. Underneath the call for 'unity' there is also a need for the state to maintain the status quo.

The RPF's archive of memorial 'kwibuka' or 'things to remember with' is

more than a store of evidence intended to impress international visitors. The state draws together archive data as an attempt to give an impression of control over the past, albeit with the paradoxical proclamation that the violence of the genocide is also beyond the scope of the knowable.

In Rwanda, the bones within the memorials have become part of the shifting of identities and of historiography in the aftermath of the genocide. This very important, in fact critical, function of the human remains stored within these crypts has often been overlooked by those commenting on the memorials.

The unsettling nature of the remains inside the memorials, and the obvious uncertainty and quandary that their storage there causes, speaks to the unstable nature of the relationships between the genocide Survivors and the RPF elite and, more broadly, between the genocide dead and the living, between the past and the present. As unstable artefacts they resist settling into coherent objects. In the hands of the Survivor-exhumers at the exhumation sites these things emerge as human remains, as persons. Placed in the memorial sites these items threaten to sink back into incoherence, they embody (literally) the disruptive and upsetting nature of matter in an indiscriminate state of ‘flow’, drawing from mourners a equivocal sense of rupture and emotional distress.

As befits the memorial as a ‘knot’ of memory, the meaning of the site and what is remembered there shifts and slides, as the international visitor approaches the remains, as the genocide Survivor picks up a bone and treats it as a person, and as the bone is returned to the shelf and allowed to slide back into uncertainty and a certain kind of spectral presence.

What is assured is that these memorials can never fully settle, they can never represent the desires of either party or their various aims. These are inherently conflicted and problematic monuments, seating uncertainty at the heart of a memorial that is intended to make the past certain. Perhaps there is a small consolation in this: in the potential for

change there is also the potential for further means of reconciliation, for the Survivor-exhumers to find some way of 'settling' things anew.

The memorial in the image below is located in Western Rwanda on the shores of Lake Kivu. The building was locked when I visited. A passer-by told me that the memorial attendants had decided that visitors should not have access to the crypt without special appeal to the caretaker. I wandered around the side of the building, only to find myself suddenly face to face with the contents of the crypt. The carefully curated window display speaks volumes both to the ambivalence that this new practice of memory continues to evoke, and to the continual, tangible entanglement that the dead and the living continue to seek for themselves in the aftermath of the conflict.

Memorial Site, Bisesoro Town, Rwanda, author's own photograph, 2011

Afterword: The Future

At the time I left Rwanda, CNLG was searching for better ways to preserve the exhumed human remains that had been recovered with substantial flesh intact. As I discussed in Chapter Five, human remains removed from the exhumed graves that contained substantial flesh were of particular interest to the RPF who were almost exclusively involved in their handling (as opposed to the bones which were managed by the Survivor-exhumers). I met with an Official of Memory and Conservation just before my departure to discuss a project the government had embarked upon to find a way to better preserve these remains.

The officer showed me photographs of a vacuum sealed glass coffins that the government was planning on importing from China. These would be used to hold the fleshy mummified remains in stasis and installed in the museum exhibition section of the Murambi memorial site. When I asked whether the remains would be identified, given that they would be individual bodies and not disarticulated bones, I was told that the bodies would carry a label with the age and sex of the person and the manner of their death. These remains have become a notorious feature of Murambi Memorial Site for instance. This site is one of the most popular memorial sites in Rwanda for international visitors and is designed, rather as the AEGIS memorial museum in Kigali, to meet the needs of an international audience specifically. Having observed and taken part in so much of the work at the exhumation sites I found this renewed focus on preserving and displaying individual sets of remains disturbing. Out of the hands of the exhumers, and encased in the floor of a museum, the bodies would be relegated to a permanent state of stasis, artefacts held captive for an audience comprised almost exclusively of international visitors. Not only was the handling of the remains in this way an extreme distancing from the practices that had been negotiated (however hesitantly and problematically) in the handling of the remains by the genocide Survivor-exhumers but presenting the remains in this way, in a vacuum sealed glass coffin, also meant these remains of the dead were permanently separate from the living,

seemingly caught forever in liminal form, in the midst of a material transformation.

The caskets and accompanying training work that was taking place to preserve the remains was at that time also going to involve a forensic team drawn from a specialist unit in the UK. The team would undertake (and have now completed) a programme of training for CNLG staff which would assist them in preserving the human remains for storage in the memorial sites.

The recognition that appropriate attention to the passage of the dead has a profound effect on the later wellbeing of the living and, by association, upon the lands on which they live, had weighed with increasing significance on humanitarian agencies working on issues relating to peace and reconciliation. Those carrying out relief work in the immediate aftermath of natural and manmade disaster (after the Asian tsunami for instance, or in Sri Lanka) have understood the proper treatment of remains to be significant.

The manner in which local communities are involved in the exhumation and handling of human remains post-conflict is an area which tends to take a second seat in recent scholarship on exhumations and reburials, which has tended to focus on reactions to undergoing or proposed exhumations that will be undertaken largely by forensic ‘specialists’ with the involvement of state administrations (to a greater or lesser extent). The emphasis has tended to be on the issue of how to identify remains, and the manner in which remains should be preserved for use as a particular kind of evidence or the manner in which they should be given memorial burial in order to allow full access to a concerned community. The involvement of the communities in the exhumation and handling of remains in and of itself - the literal hands-on involvement of those persons - has been less available for commentary.

The work of exhuming, disarticulating and presenting the remains at the

exhumation sites in an anonymous way has unsurprisingly and quite rightly provoked concern amongst those who would normally consider the careful cataloguing of mass graves, and the return of some semblance of individual identity to the dead, to be an essential aspect of recovery work (I have cited some of the more commonplace forms of this work in other places, in the introduction).

As I have demonstrated in this thesis, the exhumation, transformation and preservation of corpses and of bones in Rwanda is a complex and sensitive field. The involvement of the Survivor-exhumers in the work of exhuming and transforming the human remains is an innovative, if uncertain and contested practice. It is also a means of finding humanity in amongst the rupture and destruction of a violent past. Understanding the passage of these remains, from the grave to the memorial, and interrogating the particularities of the transformation that those substances undergo along the way, is essential if a full appreciation of the significances of these memorial sites is to be achieved.

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